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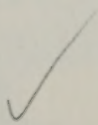
Anderson, Lee Stratton.

Valley of the shadow

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VALLEY *of the* SHADOW

THE BATTLES OF CHICKAMAUGA
AND
CHATTANOOGA
1863



BY LEE STRATTON ANDERSON

V A L L E Y
OF THE
S H A D O W

THE BATTLES OF CHICKAMAUGA
AND CHATTANOOGA
1863

*"Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death . . ." —23rd Psalm.*

BY LEE STRATTON ANDERSON

HUDSON PRINTING & LITHOGRAPHING CO.
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The Stage Is Set

Gen. Robert E. Lee at the head of 75,000 with high hopes rode north through the rolling, green, summer countryside into the hills of Pennsylvania, to Gettysburg. He might have won. He might have destroyed the Army of the Potomac, entrapped Washington in coils of gray, perhaps ended the war with victory in 1863. But he did not. There were hills at Gettysburg, and they were covered with men in blue behind cannon and breastworks. Confederate Gen. John B. Hood's men, climbing Little Round Top to flank Cemetery Ridge on the south, stopped to rest on the way up, and found Yankees on top ahead of them. And Culp's Hill, at the other end of Cemetery Ridge, above the town, was held fast by Union soldiers. There was only the center for a chance—and it was only a chance. Lee thought ragtag Union militia there might go to pieces before determined attack. "Attack," said Gen. Lee. Gen James Longstreet demurred. "Attack," said Gen. Lee.

"General, shall I advance?" asked loyal George Pickett with eagerness in his voice. Longstreet tried to speak, but could not, as he looked at brave Pickett and down the rows of his men. But he bowed sad, silent assent. And Pickett went forward, at the head of 15,000 good and true whose voices sang the slurring tones of Virginia and the drawling accents of Carolina.

Forward they went, forward across open fields, into the maw of the cannon, into the face of death. Forward they went and over the Yankee line. But by then they were too few, too few left to hold. There at a crooked stone wall, there at a grove of trees, there at the foot of Cemetery Ridge they will point and tell you that is the spot where washed the high tide of the Confederacy. Geographically, they are right. But that high tide was already in ebb. The Southern tide reached no farther North to inundate Union soil. But the real high tide was to come later, the high tide of resounding victory, the high tide of last chance, last hope.

As the news of Gettysburg rushed forth across the land to gladden the North and sadden the South, it was met by news from Vicksburg, which added to Northern jubilation and Southern desperation; Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at last had taken Vicksburg on the Mississippi.

It had not been easy. He had tried by water, but the powerful batteries of Vicksburg, set on a bluff overlooking Old Man River, turned his boats back. Then the Confed-

erates had cut through his supply lines in northern Mississippi and had sent his forces running back to Memphis. And there, as Grant massed his forces to try again, had come an order dividing his army for a side maneuver. Grant tried to canal through the peninsula facing Vicksburg to get his gunboats below the city's lethal batteries. Once his boats stuck. Twice they were forced back. But after these failures, Grant threw caution to the wind to march around Vicksburg to the west, then crossed the river below the city, leaving his supply lines behind in an audacious move that brought his army up in a tight besieging circle fencing Vicksburg against the Father of Waters that had protected it. Vicksburg, reduced to a diet of mules, rats and shoe-leather, succumbed to hunger and Grant.

Gettysburg seemed the end in the East as stalemate settled over Northern Virginia. Vicksburg was doom on the river. But in between Destiny looked down from the mountaintops of Tennessee. There was another chance. There was still hope in the Confederacy. Though the blue invader came, a new high water mark of opportunity was still to wash refreshingly upon the Confederate cause.

'The Rat Lies Hidden'

The earliest invader was the river. Stained a sluggish brown by the soil washed down from the rocky ridges of East Tennessee, the mighty Tennessee presses its determined but devious course from the highlands. Where a natural fortress with the unwarlike name of Missionary Ridge bars its direct passage, the river turns around the northern end of the barrier, flows past a little town of Chattanooga where a few muddy streets rise from a river landing in 1863. Then, striking heavy limestone, the river turns like an agitated serpent, forming the shape of an Indian moccasin as it twists around the foot of towering Lookout Mountain, then past Raccoon Mountain and through the Grand Canyon of the Tennessee below Signal Mountain.

The view from any of these heights offers a spectacle of magnificence. It can lift the spirit and restore the soul. It can sharpen the imagination and give a birdseye view of countryside comprising several states.

But Braxton Bragg does not look from the heights and see beauty. Confederate Gen. Bragg looks and sees not the winding river and the green valley. He sees only the mountains. But not with the glow of exhilaration they can bring

as they rear their green-mantled shoulders against the sky. Bragg is not a cowardly man, but he looks at the mountains with a dread that creates the mountains as personal adversaries worthy of that tight visceral knotting that even the brave sometimes know.

His horse is calm. The man is not. His straggly beard twitches and brushes the collar of his uniform, now marked with a grayness of experience and quick-gained age the tailor had not foreseen and only a soldier could appreciate. He mumbles to his companion, brave, contentious, Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill, but does not look at him, just as he does not look upon the beauty before him.

"Mountains can hide your foe from you, while they are full of gaps through which he can pounce on you at any time." His arm inexactly swings toward the passes and winding trails, some chance paths where a rambling cow wandered, some where buffalo of long-vanished herds cut their trace, forming a roadbed now appropriated by men's wagons and even the tracks of a railroad around the bend of the river at the base of Lookout Mountain's bulking, headless sphinx.

"A mountain is like a house full of ratholes," says Gen. Bragg. "The rat lies hidden at his hole, ready to pop out when no one is watching. Who can tell what lies behind that wall?"

He must know. Yet he dreads to have his question answered. He shrugs, turns his patient horse with his shifting weight, leaves the mountain ratholes to be watched by other men's eyes.

Without a Shot

At his morning prayers, Bragg's face is troubled. He lifts up his eyes unto the hills—whence cometh his enemies. He rests not beside the still waters. Yea, he walks through the valley of the shadow of death. His head is bowed, the agitated features are for a moment still. Then he rises, dark eyes brooding, his staff averting their eyes lest they meet those troubled depths of this morose man.

In Richmond, Jefferson Davis hears Bragg's grumbling, transmitted by the wires of the telegraph. The mountains. The men. The supplies. Even insubordination. Insubordination? There are men not so fearful as Bragg, not so certain

of tragedy as Bragg. There are men who have been troubled by rats, but who have set rattraps. Bragg belittles them.

August 23: "We cannot hold this town."

September 6: Evacuation ordered.

September 8: Along the streets of Chattanooga, dust rises from the feet, some bare, of the men now soldiers as they march between rows of old men and weeping women and running children, leaving this city to the Yankees. There will be no fight. The ratholes to the west and south show activity. The army moves off lest it find the rats to its rear, gnawing its supply lines toward Atlanta.

The next day the parade is the same, only blue-clad. Without a shot, Gen. Thomas Crittenden, a wild-eyed, staring man with stringy hair, sits thinly erect on his horse, leading his men into the city, busying them with placing cannon, digging redoubts, chopping firewood, scouring the town for food.

Bragg has lost a city; Crittenden has gained one. But neither has attained his objective, the destruction of the other.

Gen. William Rosecrans, the top Union commander, is no more assured than Bragg. He must have more cavalry. He makes his demands on the Union Chief of Staff in Washington, Gen. Henry W. Halleck. Halleck is disgusted by this nagging by wire. "I must protest against the expense to which you put the government for telegrams." Besides: "You already have more cavalry than any other general in the field."

Denied his telegraphic catharsis, Rosecrans must depend solely upon the comforts of Mass in the field, administered by Father Tracey. While the eyes of Bragg's men watch the ratholes vacant of beauty, Rosecrans and Father Tracey discuss the beauties of nature and the influence of God.

'Your Wife, Till Death'

Battle is not ready to be joined. The men drill and move about, scouts penetrate the woods and roam the paths, with cavalry bickering where blue and gray patrols meet. Men are not pressed yet with thoughts of the hereafter, being immediately concerned with things very present, such as food and the lack of it.

"About this time my father paid me a visit," a soldier in the 1st Tennessee says. "Rations were mighty scarce. I was mighty glad to see him, but ashamed to let him know how poorly off for something to eat we were. We were living on parched corn. I thought of a happy plan to get him a good dinner, so I asked him to let us go up to the colonel's tent. Says I, 'Colonel Field, I desire to introduce you to my father, and as rations are short in my mess, I thought you might have a little better, and could give him a good dinner.' 'Yes,' says Colonel Field, 'I am glad to make the acquaintance of your father, and will be glad to divide my rations with him. Also, I would like for you to stay and have dinner with me,' which I gladly accepted. About this time a young African came in with a frying pan of parched corn and dumped it on an old oil cloth and said, 'Master, dinner is ready.' That was all he had. He was living, like ourselves, on parched corn."

Nor is he an exception. Martha Revis replies to a letter from her Confederate husband:

"You said you hadn't anything to eat. I wish you was here to get some hams for dinner. I have plenty to eat as yet. I haven't saw any of your pap's folks since you left home. The people is generally well hereat. The people is all turning Union here since the Yankees has got Vicksburg. I want you to come home as soon as you can after you git this letter. . . . This is all I can think of, only I want you to come home the worst I ever did. The conscripts is all at home yet, and I don't know what they will do with them. The folks is leaving here and going north as fast as they can.

"Your wife, till death,
"Martha Revis."

Some men desert. In the dark of night, a man rises from his blanket roll, and walks toward the brush. Then the shadow disappears in the blackness, never to return. But some "deserters" first go to the tents of their colonels. When they "desert" they know what words to spin in the eager ears of the Federals once they cross the lines.

"Suh, the Army is running."

"We ain't go no fight left."

"They's goin' to Rome, suh."

"We's hongry and ain't go no clothes."

"Dalton, that's it, suh, to Dalton, or somewheres."

September 9: Rosecrans is in correspondence with Halleck, telling him the condition of the Confederate enemy. A letter this time (the flaying Halleck gave about the telegraph expense has made an impression): "The army has retreated to Rome. If we pursue vigorously they will not stop short of Atlanta. Troops badly demoralized; all feel they are whipped; one seventh of the troops mostly naked; the rations for three days would make a good meal."

But for once, Bragg is not downcast. He gloats. "In reality, we had concentrated opposite his center. . . . The enemy pressed on his columns to intercept us, and exposed himself in detail."

The rats are flushed from their holes. No longer do the mountain walls hide the enemy. Now the way is clear and opportunity sings a love song. Bragg has 35,000 men around LaFayette in Georgia. But the Union forces are scattered across a rough countryside—Gen. George H. Thomas opposite Bragg, Gen. A. McD. McCook to Thomas' right by 40 miles of winding road needed to traverse 25 miles, Crittenden to Thomas' left 25 miles, at Ringgold.

Bragg is a match for any one, with time and distance provided for each to be defeated and routed separately.

The rattrap has been opened and the rats have come in with careless abandon. With equal carelessness, the trapper fails to close his trap. He is in a stew, 10 miles to the rear. Gen. D. H. Hill sees the trouble:

"The trouble with him was: first, lack of knowledge of the situation; second, lack of personal supervision of the execution of his orders. No general ever won a permanent fame who was wanting in these grand elements of success: knowledge of his own and his enemy's condition, and personal superintendence of operations on the field. . . . The truth is, General Bragg was bewildered by 'the popping out of the rats from so many holes.' The wide dispersion of the Federal forces, and their confrontal of him at so many points, perplexed him instead of being a source of congratulation that such grand opportunities were offered for crushing them one by one. He seems to have no well-organized system of independent scouts such as Lee had. . . . So General Bragg only learned that he was encircled by foes, without knowing who they were, what was their strength and what were their plans."

Pillars of Cloud

Two mighty armies of thousands of men tramp through the narrow, dusty roads, their feet sending up pillars of cloud that might have guided a military Moses through the wilderness that hovers covetously at the roadsides, threatening to retake the bared ground with constricting entanglements of honeysuckle, pine sprouts and shoots of oak rising from germinated acorns dropped by nature in the acid leaf mold. The armies march uncertainly, the shadows of the thickets ominously contesting passage. What might lie in wait there? Off in the distance rises the sound of musket fire, quick, sudden blasts, then a rumble of galloping horses, then a shift of scattered shots in a different direction. These are the flashes of lightning that warn of a coming storm.

On the night of September 17, Gen. Rosecrans bends his handsome features over a vital task. He knows battle, has faced its vicissitudes in victory and in defeat. He knows the signs and hears the lightning flashes. His face is serious as he directs wires, despite Halleck, to a selected mailing list of preachers throughout the North. A great battle is about to begin in the West. He must fight it. He seeks their prayers for his cause.

Rosecrans reads the signs well. Bragg's army is in motion early the next day, moving down the east bank of winding Chickamauga Creek, shielded by the heavy growth, stealthily seeking to get between the Union army and Chattanooga. Rosecrans moves, too, matching the Confederates' northern move by sending his columns along the valley to the west side of Chickamauga Creek at the base of Missionary Ridge.

Two great armies move through the heavy woods, neither knowing the position of the other, yet moving as though attracted by magnets to each other.

Gen. John B. Gordon with the Confederate forces knows the country well. Reared in North Georgia, he has walked quietly through these woods before, has cast his line into the muddy Chickamauga and waited patiently under overhanging shade for the catfish that move in its pools. At the end of Missionary Ridge where Rossville Gap opens the way to Chattanooga, John Gordon had slept in the house of John Ross, the halfbreed Indian chief of the Cherokees whose trading post of Ross' Landing on the bank of the Tennessee had become the town of Chattanooga.

But thoughts of some are not on yesterday, or tomorrow. They think not of peaceful days or of the battle that is to come. The present is a mighty thing to a tired man with an empty stomach. The hot and weary men in tattered gray of Stewart's Division get orders to bivouac for the night at Thedford's Ford. Little time is required for the kind of bivouac they make. Guns are flung down, leaves scraped together, rusty blankets spread. But hungry men, like hungry animals, move by instinct in search of satisfaction. Near Mrs. Thedford's house at the ford stretches a little garden path that offers hope of reward. Winding potato vines give hint of buried treasure. Already, grimy hands search the earth for brown nuggets. Mouths water as men fall on their knees with bayonets or sticks and smiles of anticipation of the mealy flavor of hot potatoes baked under the coals of a campfire, a prospect now richer because of its reality than would be a Roman emperor's feast.

Piles of potatoes begin to appear on the earth's surface as a stern officer happens upon the busy scene. "Hold on, men." He knows their needs, for they are his also. But his men do not steal from their own people when he is there, whatever their need. His men do not ravage their own land as they defend it. "Hold on there, men!" The bent backs of the soldiers straighten; their hands fall limply to their sides, letting escape the clods and the brown lumps they so eagerly sought. They look up. Another voice rings out. "Hold on, Mr. Officer!" It is a woman's voice. "Hold on. Those are my potatoes and my boys. Let 'em take 'em."

Mrs. Thedford stands on her door step. She sees the hungry gray soldiers brought up short in their digging. She sees too, her own two sons, wounded in Virginia. They were like these, "her boys." A chatter of thanks goes up, and the backs bend again to the digging.

The Hunters

By a little light in a tent across the creek, a young man bends over a sheet of paper to write. He is from Wisconsin, lately, but his name has the sound of his native Norway. Hans Christian Heg, Colonel, United States Army, has traveled far in his 34 years. Now he sends a message from Chickamauga to his wife in Wisconsin. He writes of the prospects of his commander, Rosecrans: "I think if it is true that the rebels have not gone, that he will give them one of the biggest whippings they have ever had. . . ."

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In the darkness before dawn, the Confederates at the head of the long line are roused and turned in a new direction. The two armies, one in blue and the other in tatters of gray and butternut, have moved in motley parade more than five miles long but less than a mile apart on opposite banks of the creek. Now that watery barrier is to be crossed. Now Gen. Bragg's plan is to be tried. His march has been to head off the Union army. His march has been to outpace his enemy. Now he will turn across the enemy's flank and trap him in Chickamauga's valley.

Down across the fields and through the brush the soldiers come. They hold their guns high, avoiding the bushes. Briars tug at their clothes and pierce them, marking red threadlines across their skin. In years past, thus had many of them picked their way in darkness, listening now and then for the baying ahead of faithful hounds hot on the scent of coon or fox or possum. But now there is no sound of dogs. The hunt is on, more earnestly than ever before. The hunted now is not animal but man. There is no scent, no sound. No sound save the swush of feet in sagebrush, the swickering of tiny limbs drawn back by the passage of a body, then released like an unburdened catapult. Ahead, the horizon towers and is darkened. There the trees grow taller and thicker, because their searching roots have reached deeper and stronger for the nourishment assured in the depths by the flowing moisture of the creek. On the bank of Chickamauga, the columns draw into bunches. There are whispered words, huddled directions. Then a few figures move forward, parting the woody curtain. They seek sure footholds on the banks that rise higher than a man's head above the water that moves slowly and darkly except where snags of fallen trees challenge the current or where shallows show on gravel bars. The first feet reach the water. There are mild splashes. Then, the way found, other men clamber down the banks and with audible gasps step out of the mild September night into the cold water. Immediately they feel the coolness take possession of them to their armpits. They hold their guns high, higher than the lifted chins. In places, the water is shallower, only knee deep. A man ventures on an untried path and splashes over his head, thrown by incaution on a slippery rock or in a hidden hole.

The passage is not long. A few score steps are enough, even to avoid the snags, to seek the bars, to wind out on the other side. Then up the rutted bank and sound, dry, level footing is there again. There is a soft wind that whispers

across the wet bodies, chilling more than did the water itself. Soon the lines form once more and move forward. But the warmth of movement does not last, for soon the order comes to halt and the men lie down and wait.

Other men are not waiting. In the darkness toward Missionary Ridge, Gen. Thomas leads his Federal troops toward Chattanooga. All night they march, having guessed the aim of their opponents.

Listen to the Mockingbird

Through the darkness from the treetops rings an eery trill, a warbling, variable birdsong. In soft prelude to the bitter morrow, mockingbirds sing across the quiet acres of Chickamauga. Their song rings through the wilderness, down narrow lanes, and flows across little fields cut from the woods by those who sleep in small log houses at their edges.

Some eyes are sleepless, following invisible movements in the trees, with thoughts miles away. Some hear not the songs, but the sounds of past battles repeating themselves in reminder of tomorrow as if it were not soon enough. Some sleep soundly, hearing neither mockingbirds nor ghostly cannon.

There is no plan to begin the battle at once. More men are to be brought across the stream during the day so the Confederate army may be marshaled with its back to the creek, ready to turn across the valley between creek and the foothills of Missionary Ridge and stopper the bottle in which moves the Northern army.

Confederates are across at Reed's Bridge and Alexander's Bridge, avoiding the depths in between, and are ready to cross the creek to the south at Thedford's Ford, at Lee and Gordon's Mill and at other shallows.

Even the dawn, however, does not lift the blindness from the opposing commanders' eyes. Bragg does not know his outflanking march has been outflanked. Nor does nervous Rosecrans feel secure in his position.

Gen. Thomas orders Gen. John M. Brannan to look toward Chickamauga and find what is taking place there. Down a narrow track Brannan's men move and suddenly the crack of musketry brings them up short. From the brush rise the forms of Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry,

horses to the rear, riders dismounted and fighting as infantry. The dawn patrol on this Confederate right flank halts the Yankee scouts, then recoils and falls back.

Up come Confederates in force and smash against the Northerners, whose reinforcements return the blow, forcing a shattered retreat. Give and take, until the lines are drawn and bitter fire rains from muskets and blasts from cannon boom out.

"While our troops had been moving up the Chickamauga, the Yankees had been moving down, and thus outflanked us," Gen. Hill explains.

In huddles behind logs and tree trunks, even shielding bunches of grass, men go about the business of war. From pouches they take paper cartridges, tear them open frenziedly with their teeth, jam them into musket muzzles, ramming them home, then force balls into place. Now to aim. There is a man, his face stained by powder, like yours. His eyes are wide with excitement, like yours. His rifle is raised, like yours. Yet it is an impersonal thing. He's a man and yet not a man. He is an enemy, a target, a form. His rifle is at his shoulder now, like yours. Both guns fire and two bodies hunch and then slip to the ground, gaping maroon holes torn in them. Then shouts, screaming, shrill, high-pitched yells, like a fox hunter's cry but magnified a thousand times and more urgent than any hunt, ring out and men rush forward. There is another man, so close there is no time for aim, no need for aim. The long barrel points and flashes fire and smoke. The body goes down, stained with a black char of powder. Men fight hand to hand, shielded each from the other's view by the thick growth until they spring unsuspecting upon each other. They grapple, they stab, they gouge, they kick, they fire, and others fire and bodies fall and are passed by.

Rendezvous With Death

Col. Heg rides forward at the head of his Third Brigade. He leads the charge. Bullets tear his ranks as his flank is exposed to fire in the advance, naked to the Confederates at the side as his men face Confederates to his front. Men in gray swab out their cannon with briney mops, ram in bags of powder, then grape shot, or balls, or canister, or scrap pieces of chain. The mouth of the gun is cleared and aim is swiftly taken and the fuse is lit. A thundering boom and then smoke and then there is a gap in the lines

hundreds of yards before it. Trees and horses and men fall without difference. Along the flanks, sharpshooters fit their pieces to their shoulders and with care gaze down long barrels as they squeeze their triggers.

Col. Heg motions his men forward. A sharpshooter takes careful aim at the blue-uniformed man on the horse. Col. Heg's motion stops in midair. He folds over his mount's neck and an involuntary grimace of intense pain crosses his face. He seizes the place where the bullet penetrated. His troops fall back, but the wounded colonel rallies his men, then rides a quarter of a mile to a hospital before tumbling from his bloody mount. He will see death before the battle sees its end, the first brigade commander on either side to fall.

Mrs. Thedford's potato patch is deserted. No more do men grovel in the dirt for food. Some of the same men now lie in her house and across her yard, bloody wreckage of battle, tended with an inadequacy of ability but with an abundance of tenderness by a woman who is thinking of her sons in Virginia. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner's men call her the "Mother of Chickamauga."

The ragged lines move through the thick brush, parting leafy twigs, eyes moving restlessly from the immediate obstacle of undergrowth toward that unseen but anticipated obstacle: the enemy line. Muttering men push back branches, then look to their muskets. Are they ready? When will we see the Yankees? When will the Rebs break into sight? The lines move close together, and then pause involuntarily as blue sees gray. A man from Virginia raises his voice: "You're not fighting conscripts now!" A farmer who followed the plow over rich midwestern loam answers: "And you're not fighting New York store clerks." The smallarms fire patters, zipping on the foliage of the saplings, splatting into solid flesh. Some of the men fall, bite off cartridge papers, rise on elbows with ramrods to drive the loads down their musket barrels, and are struck in the chest. Some, standing, rush forward, halt to reload, then push on again. When the men draw face to face and shots have been fired, long, thin bayonets prod ominously toward the foe. They jab and dodge and jerk, then fall back to reload.

"Bring that gun up!" The horses jump in their traces and the big wheels of the carriage bounce over the trails. Bits cut into horses' mouths as reins are pulled back and cannon are positioned. Then traces are quickly loosed and a limber brings up powder and shot. Grape is loaded and the

barrel leveled and the fuse touched. The cannon leaps into the air, rearing back on the trail of the gun carriage. Where saplings and men joust ed each against the other, contesting passage, a great void breathes smoke, with broken trees and broken men leveled. Where brilliant ensigns flashed, now tattered banners lie in the dust till with a shout they are seized and lifted afresh. A man in gray raises the red flag and its bars of blue with white stars throw a wordless challenge. Then with the zing of a harp string, a bullet sings a lullaby of death and the color bearer falls.

Cavalry, Minie Balls, Fire

There on the ground solemn men go methodically about their grueling business. They fire, then crouch low and load to fire again. "Who are you?" "Forrest's cavalry." "Cavalry on the ground?"

To the rear every fourth man stands out of gun range holding bridles of jerking horses, while his mates crawl forward on foot. The blue line breaks. Horse holders dash forward with the horses. Now the dismounted cavalry is mounted. Guns are thrust into scabbards and pistols rise in the hands of horsemen pressing down on the disordered foe. Gen. Hill has never seen fighting like this.

An apparition on horseback presses forward, spurs biting his horse's flanks. It is a tall man, sitting erect despite the heavy fire. A gray slouch hat's broad brim flaps over a fierce face. A white linen duster, now stained by sweat and dust, flutters about his knees. Pistol and sword are buckled on the outside. Up and down along the line the man in linen duster parades, urging men on, then turns, leading them on. Bedford Forrest is in the center of the whirlwind.

To the left, at the center of the line, Gen. John B. Hood and his staff ride forward through a splotch of field that determined farmers had wrested from the wilderness.

Hood's men cheer their general. At Gettysburg, just over two months before, he was wounded in the left arm. On sick leave in Virginia when he heard his division was being moved to Georgia, Gen. Hood had a sling tied on his arm and hastened to join them. He could not let his men go into action without him. He boarded the first train he could and reached Chickamauga. Now he rides before his troops, who only the day before had seen him for the first time since Gettysburg.

Minie balls rain upon Hood and his staff. Horses rear, squealing, shying, bucking. There is a buzz of angry yellow-jackets. A huge nest empties its inhabitants in ire upon the soldiers. The men pull on bridles, squeeze with their knees to hold their seats, swat with hats at the offending yellow-jackets. The melee spreads, and the effectiveness of a charge is destroyed, a point won by tiny, fiery stingers rather than musket balls.

A new enemy: fire. The woods smoulder, ignited by the firing. Smoke billows up, and with it hideous screams. Men who faced battle with stolid courage, who suffered the searing, tearing of their flesh by flattening balls, shout in agony as the flames creep upon them, burning bodies that linger between life and death. A mere boy drags his body, legs hanging uselessly like a huge caudal appendage of a prehistoric monster. His arms pull hard, propelling him painfully and bloodily away from the tongues of flame until, exhausted, he leans against the trunk of a tree and, taking his legs in his hands, draws them painfully up against his chest. But the fire comes on and spears out, turning flesh black and bringing a comforting sleep of shock that shrouds the mind and senses as a burning death devours the body of the boy.

Wounded horses thrash and scream, then fall victim of the flames. Carnes' battery is trapped. So many horses are shot and burned that guns are abandoned and gunners flee.

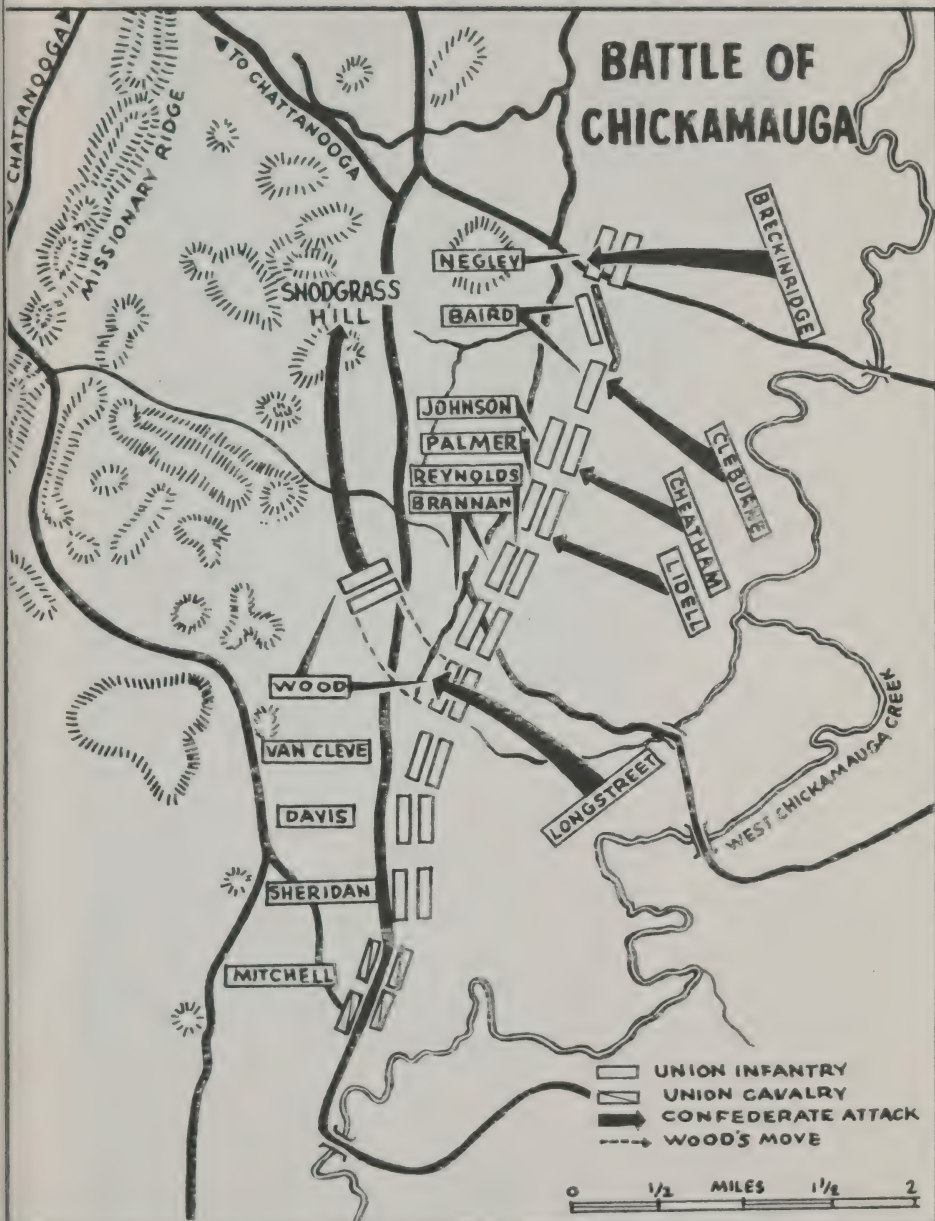
Amateur Boxer

Down the center of the valley between hills and creek winds the LaFayette Road. Back across it the Federal soldiers are pushed, then, determined to go no farther, they resolutely prepare a stand. Confederates burst out of woods and charge, only to be thrown back. The narrow LaFayette Road is littered with the human refuse of battle as it becomes the "bloody lane" of Chickamauga.

Now the firing slows. There are fewer shots to the right. Then the center, as though answering a signal, slows its fire, and the wordless order is taken up by the left. Then silence.

It is a noisy silence. The whisper of a man's own breath is loud. Tiny, winged insects fighting their own battle of survival, unmindful of the war of men raging about them, hum and hover in the late summer air. Silence. Deafening, after the battle that Hill describes:

BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA





The shoulder of Lookout Mountain upon which the battle was fought.

"It was the sparring of the amateur boxer, and not the crushing blows of the trained pugilist.

"From daylight on the 19th until midday there was a gap two miles wide between Crittenden and Thomas into which the Confederates could have poured, turning to right or left and attacking in flank whichever commander was least prepared for the assault.

"I witnessed some of the heaviest fighting on the afternoon of the 19th, and never saw so little straggling on the field. I saw but one deserter from Hood's ranks, and not one from Cleburne's."

The silence cannot last. There must be another effort. The sun is past the hills and dusk is not far off. "Up, men; up, men." The gray officers rouse their troops from the semi-coma of exhaustion. "Charge." Forward, almost mechanically, the men dash forward, through the scarred and smoldering woods, stepping over dead bodies as though they were logs. Guns flash again and over the din of battle a voice rings out. It comes from a wounded man. His bowels pouring out of his broken belly, he raises himself with one hand, thrusting the life back inside his body with the other, and then with his last strength waves a piece of an old hat and cries, "Boys, when I left we were drivin' 'em." The advancing column speeds its pace.

There is heavy exchange of fire, then surges forward and backward. Charges by the Yankees and charges by the Rebels, and the sun drops, tired as the men who welcome the cool of approaching darkness.

The advance of the Confederate Army of Tennessee is checked. The Confederates have pushed forward three-quarters of a mile. They hold the field. But there is no decision. The decision would come to superior numbers. Rosecrans shifts his right and center to his left. Bragg, hearing this, goes to pieces, waiting ineffectively at Thedford's Ford for news which to him inevitably seems bad. He is in the most important battle of his career, the battle of life or death for the Confederate States of America. But he wrings his hands, wishing for more men, yet not committing what he has to the fray.

Brig. Gen. Preston Smith, hair flowing and his moustache and beard stained by sweat, rides forward. It is darkening but still light at 7 p.m. For the third time, he finds troops halted to his front. As he has twice before, Gen. Smith rides forth to straighten out the lines, then move

them forward. With him is his aide, Capt. Thomas H. King. "What is the cause for delay? Whose troops are these?" Not until he is among the halted men does Gen. Smith see they are Federal soldiers, not Confederates. He has advanced beyond his own lines into those of the enemy. The general wheels his horse, leans low across its neck as Yankee bullets crash over his head. He is almost back to his own lines when a meteor strikes his chest. Over his heart, a gold watch ticks its last second, springs flying apart, giving but another second to the life of the man. Deflected by the watch, the Minie ball glances into the abdomen of the general, who tumbles at the feet of a Texan, the slug falling loose beside him. Nearby, Union Gen. Baldwin lies in pierced uniform reddened by his own and his fallen comrades' blood. A Texan looks into the face of Gen. Smith. It is quiet in death. The soldier picks up the bullet. He will send it to his family with the tale of how it ended the life of the brave officer from Tennessee.

Moonlight, Blood, Hunger

Faint moonlight is almost shut out by thick foliage. But it sifts through in ghostly haze on the faces of dead and wounded. Like voices from the depths, the wails of injured and dying men whine through the night. Stretcher bearers from both sides pick their way among the bodies. If a man has strength to call, he is painfully lifted onto a stretcher and taken back to a field hospital where lazy death most likely awaits him. If he is unable to wring a sound from parched vocal cords, he dies where he fell.

Neither Rosecrans nor Bragg has been on the field during the morning, but Rosecrans had Thomas in action as Lee used Jackson. Bragg, with more men, failed to commit them, dooming himself to an anguished night.

The night is chilly. But there are no fires. The two armies lie too close for that. Men creep through the meager moonlight, cursing softly as they fall over dead and moaning wounded. Through the shattered cornfields, tired soldiers scramble in search of corn to answer the demands of their growling stomachs. There is little corn for the horses. They must eat if they are to pull the cannon and carry their masters in battle. There is no corn for the men.

There lies a body with haversack fastened on now stiff shoulders. A soldier turns over the body, pries into the haversack. Crackers yield to his touch. He looks at them in the

faint light, sees their edges soaked with blood. Hastily, the dark stains are chipped off and the soggy sections discarded. Then the soldier hungrily crunches them.

Thwack, thwack, thwack. The sound of axes rings in the cool night. Officers move among the men, directing the building of log ramparts and ditches, barricades from which to stand the morrow's test. In the thickets, trees fall with a crash in the underbrush. Limbs are trimmed and men form in lines, their hands seizing limb stubs to move the logs into place.

Col. Von Schrader loses his way in the darkness and rides into Rebel lines. Eager hands pull him from his horse and make him prisoner.

"Water, water," moan the wounded. Stretcher-bearers lean forward, holding candles that flicker in search of flickering life. The boy's face is smiling, his eyes open. The stretcher-bearers move to his side. The candle lights a stain on his head, the mark where a bullet had entered his brain.

Bud Loran, a new recruit from Rutherford County in Tennessee, shivers in the darkness. The fear of battle that comes when guns are quiet is upon him. He remembers that first moment. The line had moved forward, standing, firing. Then, after the first volley, the whole line fell—except Bud. "Great God," he shouted, "the first shot got 'em all but me." In wonder, he had looked around. His battlewise comrades had dropped to reload their guns.

At the Widow Glenn's house, near the foot of the hills to the west of the battlefield, Gen. Rosecrans had directed his engineers to run the telegraph wire that is comforting to him since through it he can speed his complaints across broad spaces. To Gen. Burnside, at Knoxville, he appeals: "Johnston is with Bragg with a large portion of his force and reinforcements have arrived from Virginia. We need all we can concentrate to oppose them. Let me hear from you. It is of the utmost importance that you close down this way to cover our left flank. We have not force to cover our flank against Forrest now; we may want all the help we can get promptly."

He was wrong about Johnston, right about needing reinforcements. But he is to get none. To the Confederates, however, aid is on the way.

'Follow the Main Road'

To the Confederate rear, within sound of battle, a heavy train puffs into Catoosa Station near Ringgold. It has hardly stopped before Gen. James Longstreet is standing on the ground, looking about in the darkness of the night. Has Bragg sent no guide to hasten this welcome assistance to the battlefield at Chickamauga? Bragg has sent none. Impatient Longstreet has only the general directions to "follow the main road."

Horses are unloaded and Longstreet and two aides mount and press forward at a canter along the main road toward Chickamauga. They have ridden a time and the horses are sweaty when out of the darkness rings a challenge: "Who's there?"

Longstreet answers, asking the guard to identify himself. The picket sounds off with the number of his brigade.

What is this? The number of his brigade! The significance of this immediately flashes through Longstreet's mind. Confederate brigades bear the *names* of their commanders. *Yankee* brigades are numbered!

Has Gen. Bragg lost his Battle of Chickamauga by failing to send a guide to lead Gen. Longstreet to the Confederate lines? Will the great general from Virginia be made prisoner before he can arrive at the scene of battle? In the darkness of the night, with the heat of impending capture, Longstreet acts coolly. Flicking his reins as though in no hurry, the general who has challenged his challenger, speaks, not in question nor as an order, but as a mutually acceptable act. "Let us ride down a little way to find a better crossing."

Before the Federal soldier can raise a question or objection, Longstreet and his aides ride off into the shadows of nearby trees, then speed away into the night.

It is 11 o'clock before Longstreet reaches Bragg's headquarters, where Bragg is roused and comes stumbling from his bed in an ambulance wagon, rubbing sleep from his eyes and smoothing his thick hair. After a conference that continues till midnight, Bragg seeks to move his troops in reorganization in the dark thickets of the Chickamauga wilderness as though he were rearranging chessmen on a parlor board. The army is now divided into two wings, with the Bishop-Gen. Leonidas Polk commanding the right wing and Gen. Longstreet commanding the left. Bragg hands Longstreet a copy of the general order of two days before and

directions for action at the approaching dawn, along with a crude map of the roads and creek and hills and patches of farmland between the opposing armies. Longstreet sets out to prepare himself for his morning's work.

Red Dawn

Dawn comes like a hellish nightmare. The cool of the night has been saturated with the moisture from the creek. In the brush, thick mists hang. A bloody red glow tints the scene as the sun rises from behind eastern hills, auguring the bloody business that soon will be at hand.

As though Satan himself were present in the dawn, the acrid, nostril-burning stench of stale gunsmoke from yesterday is entrapped along the ground by the foggy air.

The attack is to begin at dawn. Dawn is here. Where is the attack? Gen. Polk, whose right wing is to commence the attack, is silent. Gen. B. F. Cheatham and Gen. W. H. T. Walker are ready to move when they hear Gen. Hill's guns. It is to be Bragg's favorite maneuver, attack along a line from the right, movement by each unit triggering action by the one on its left, until the whole line is aflame.

As the Army of Tennessee seeks its positions, two more brigades of Gen. Lafayette McLaws' men, fresh by train from Virginia, march briskly into sight, their uniforms parade-ground bright. The ragged Tennesseans hoot, the cry of the proud veteran covetous and yet scornful of the well-clad newcomer. "Them's pretty breeches." "'Fore the day's over, they'll be dirty." "Those work pants, boys?" Soon, the hooting gives way to comradeship and the soldiers, in uniforms old and new, gather in bunches, conjecturing that maybe there won't be any battle today. Maybe the Yanks "got their belly full" yesterday.

Bragg knows better. Raging, he orders Maj. Lee to find that laggard Polk. Maj. Lee spurs forward, but he cannot find Polk with his troops who are drawn up on the west side of Chickamauga Creek ready for battle. Following directions of those he meets, Maj. Lee crosses the creek and approaches a comfortable farmhouse. There, the bishop-general, partaking of a substantial breakfast, receives Gen. Bragg's message inquiring why the attack has not begun and renewing the order for immediate action.

With dignity, Polk replies. "Do tell Gen. Bragg that my heart is overflowing with anxiety for the attack—overflow-

ing with anxiety, sir." Maj. Lee, gritting his teeth, salutes and spurs quickly away, to Bragg.

Later, Polk's courier, sent urgently to press Hill forward, returns in dismay. He cannot find Hill anywhere. The army cannot wait. Take Polk's message to Hill's division commanders. "Move upon and attack the enemy as soon as you are in position."

The courier rides to Gen. Pat Cleburne's headquarters, and there is Hill, with Cleburne and Gen. John C. Breckinridge, in conference. But when attack does not come quickly, Bragg does, riding upon the scene and, infuriated, demanding to know the cause of the delay. Hill says he cannot move yet, "for an hour or more," that he is just beginning to issue rations for his men's breakfast. Angry, Bragg rails at Hill, but reserves his blackest thoughts for Polk, whom he neither trusts nor likes.

Hill says Bragg is at fault for failing to make "the essential preparations for the battle." Breckinridge, who is to fire the first shot, is still transferring his division from the left flank in that complete nocturnal reorganization of the line ordered by Bragg. It is not his fault he did not get Gen. Polk's order, Hill contends. The night before, he had ridden to the spot where Bragg had said he could be found, but neither Bragg nor Polk was there. News of the sunrise attack came as a surprise, not to mention a rude interruption of plans for breakfast, for Hill did not receive them until "some time after sunrise."

Nor is all in order on the left. The day, now turning brisk and bright and clear, is advancing when Longstreet, with an overcoat buttoned over his wreaths of rank, rides through the woods inspecting his units. He finds his command, moved into position in the darkness, with a half-mile of gaping woodland between it and Polk's right wing. Longstreet rides up to Gen. A. P. Stewart, who had been his roommate at West Point, and greets him warmly. But there is little time for nostalgic recollections. They are facing the enemy. Battle is imminent. Move to the right, Longstreet tells his old friend. Move to the right and close the gap. Stewart moves, only to find himself in front of Cheatham, at the left of the right wing, and so he must shift again, while Cheatham joins Walker in reserve and Hood's men move forward to the front line where destiny awaits them.

The boys are finishing their breakfast of beef and cold water and waiting with the nervous impatience that is a prelude to battle. One soldier moves leisurely back from the front, picking his way toward the rear.

A man on horseback sings out, "Hello, my good fellow, you are not going to leave us, are you?" The soldier stops and looks at the strange figure. "See here, you old hunting shirt snoozer, do you know who you are talking to?" The horseman roars with laughter. He introduces himself to the departing private; he is Gen. Longstreet. Longstreet laughs again; the private grins sheepishly. Both men move toward the line where battle is promised.

The sun has been up for hours now. No gun has been fired. The silence is broken only by the chopping of axes and the swishing crash of trees as the Federal troops build their barricades higher. Gen. Rosecrans is in his saddle. Why does not the enemy come? The Yankee soldiers, with the nervous boastfulness that so naturally precedes battle, suggest the "Johnnies" have had enough of "Rosie's pills." But Rosecrans is not so certain. He motions here and there, making last-minute adjustments. Thomas is told to hold his position on the left at all costs. McCook is shifting on the right, while Union Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden (whose brother, Confederate Gen. George B. Crittenden, had been defeated by Thomas early in the war and, though exonerated of charges of treason and drunkenness, was permitted to resign from the Confederate army and go to Texas) was placed in reserve.

Bells and Judgment Day

In the clear air beyond Missionary Ridge where the Tennessee River winds in brown sluggishness through the town of Chattanooga, church bells chime piercingly at 9 o'clock, calling children to Sunday School. To the east of Missionary Ridge, at Chickamauga, signal guns finally boom out, calling wounded armies to a mortal day of judgment.

A ringing cry sweeps up on the right; Breckinridge's men leap to their duty. Crouching over their muskets, they run forward toward the Union breastworks.

In Washington, a tall, gaunt, ugly man, bowed with the weight of issues that have divided the nation he serves, wonders what is taking place far away, down in the woods of Georgia, where a creek wanders along the border of Tennessee. Lincoln, Kentucky born, does not know Kentuckians are now leading the charge against the Union lines. Mrs. Lincoln, wife of the President of the United States, does not know her half-sister's husband, Ben Helm, is rushing upon Union troops this very instant.

The Union troops fire from behind their log and dirt breastworks. But a body of Confederates charges resolutely under Confederate Brig. Gen. Helm. A stern face peers from beneath moustache and beard that merges with his choker collar, covering his general's wreaths. From under his hat, long hair growing around the edge of a bald crown turns up in a fringe. Four hundred yards Gen. Helm advances, then musket and artillery fire break upon his brigade and the general tumbles dying from his horse.

The Confederates rally, rush forward again. They fall upon the ground, fire, reload, fire. The Federal troops push them back, then in turn are pushed back. Again and again, the attack goes forward, Union lines giving, then recoiling. Desperately, Breckinridge fights his way across the road to Rossville, the little village lying at a gap in Missionary Ridge between Chickamauga and Chattanooga.

Other troops move into action. Hill, spurring up and down the line, pressing his belated attack, sees stubborn men on foot pushing forward. "Whose infantry is that?" "That's Forrest's cavalry, sir," snaps the answer. Hill's mouth falls open incredulously. "Can I see Gen. Forrest?" An officer leads Gen. Hill forward and calls Forrest from the front. The tall cavalry general, in bizarre linen duster, approaches Hill, who raises his hat in salute. "Gen. Forrest," Hill smiles, "I wish to congratulate you and those brave men moving across the field like veteran infantry upon their magnificent behavior. In Virginia I made myself extremely unpopular with the cavalry because I said that so far I had not seen a dead man with spurs on; but no one can speak disparagingly of such troops as yours." Forrest expresses his thanks, and rides back into battle.

But Thomas cries for reinforcements, and Rosecrans rushes men to his aid. The strengthened Union left steadily draws men from the right, making the left impregnable, though the Confederates dash stubbornly against it.

Longstreet pushes his men against the Union right, but the Federal soldiers fight back savagely. Longstreet's men sweep forward past Gen. Bragg, as he sits his horse near the road to Chattanooga, pale, frowning, careworn, with a dusty white havelock worn over his cap and hanging over his neck.

'One Man?'

Gen. Longstreet is surveying his forces when an agitated man, riding a heavy artillery horse whipped with a

rope to a trot, comes upon him. Brave Gen. Henry Lewis Benning pours out his distress. Hat gone, uniform in disarray, Gen. Benning shouts, "General, my brigade is utterly destroyed and scattered."

Gen. Longstreet looks deep into Benning's face. "Don't you think you could find one man, General?"

"One man?" Benning asks in astonishment. "I suppose I could. What do you want with him?"

"Go and get him and bring him here." Longstreet places a steady hand on Benning's arm and says, "Then you and I and he will charge together."

Benning's troubled face flashes a smile, with a laugh and an oath. He swings his rope and his big horse bounds away. In a few moments, a motley command sweeps forward, shouted onward by a general astride an artillery horse.

'Close Up on Reynolds'

Longstreet, pressing against the weakened Union right, finds himself in a stubborn contest. His men push forward into Federal works covered by brush and are mowed down by cannon fire, as grape and canister shower the woods. But the troops dash forward until they are stopped by a second row of works. A "bucket brigade" of five or six Yankee soldiers is serving each cannon while one firer stands at each gun, instantly ready to touch off the charge that sends whistling death rattling through the trees and brush, with saplings splitting like cracks of lightning. Gen. Deshler, moving in the open to place his men, is struck squarely by a round shot that passes completely through his chest, tearing out his heart and ribs before dashing the punctured body to the ground.

Rosecrans is able to withstand the heavy initial assault by moving units from his right into points where concentrations are necessary to hold back the shouting Rebels. Union Gen. Rosecrans finds that the shifting of the battle line has created an opening. He turns to his aide, Maj. Bond, and shouts across his shoulder, "Tell Gen. Wood to close that gap."

Maj. Bond, moving with haste in the tenseness of battle, summons a courier to carry the fateful message and quickly writes:

"To General Wood—

"The general commanding directs that you close up on Reynolds as fast as possible, and support him.

Bond."

Off goes the courier, carrying what to him is a routine message, but which is destined to decide the fierce contest in the wilderness of Chickamauga.

It is 11:15 a.m. on the bloody 20th of September when the messenger comes upon Gen. Thomas J. Wood and McCook, sitting on horseback at the junction of their commands, members of their staffs around them. The attack is progressing up the line from the Union left toward the generals as Wood, a solid, dependable old regular from Kentucky, opens the message written by Maj. Bond from Gen. Rosecrans. Wood peers questioningly at the order and turns and reads it aloud to Gen. McCook.

Close up on Reynolds? Why, Brannan's Division, stretched over a quarter of a mile of field and woodland, lies between Wood's troops and Reynolds. It's utter nonsense!

It is indeed, but Wood does not know that Rosecrans is unaware that Brannan's troops intervene. Wood is a soldier; here is an order, in writing. Wood has been chewed out for questioning orders.

"Mack," says Wood to Gen. McCook, "I'll move out by the right flank and rear to hide my move from the enemy."

"No, Tom," says McCook, "just march out by the left flank."

Gen. Wood grits his teeth and with a shrug of his shoulders sends word for the movement. In rough lines, Wood's men move out to their left, the head of the column twisting toward the rear to move behind Brannan's Division and to the rear of Reynolds in a position of support as called for by the written order.

Wider yawns the door of opportunity, and with a piercing yell of welcome, Longstreet's troopers, seeking a passage, charge into a vacant avenue.

"All became confusion," says surprised Federal Gen. Gates P. Thruston. "No order could be heard above the tempest of battle. With a wild yell the Confederates swept on far to their left. They seemed everywhere victorious. Rosecrans was borne back in the retreat. Fugitives, wounded, caissons, escort, ambulances, thronged the narrow pathways."

The blood beats hotly in the breast of Gen. Hood. Waving his arm, sling and all, he rides crashing through the brush near the Brotherton house, shouting to his men. Hood, the avenging spearpoint of the Confederacy, cries out above the sound of fire: "Go ahead, and keep ahead of everything!" A Minie ball sings through the hot air, plumping into a target of warm flesh and bone, and blood spurts from the shattered right thigh of a wounded Hood as his men dash into the arms of opportunity and death and victory.

Rout

U.S. Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, wearied by the out-of-doors activities and hours in the saddle, lies sleeping in the woods when he is awakened by a nightmare turned reality! "I had not slept much for two nights and lay down on the grass. I was awakened by the most infernal noise I ever heard. I sat up, and the first thing I saw was Gen. Rosecrans crossing himself—he was a very devout Catholic. 'Hello,' I said to myself. 'If the general is crossing himself, we are in a desperate situation.'

"I looked around toward the front where all this din came from, and I saw our lines break and melt away like leaves before the wind. Then the headquarters around me disappeared. The graybacks came through with a rush, and soon musket balls and the cannon shot began to reach the place where we stood. The whole right of the army had apparently been routed.

"I turned my horse and, making my way over Missionary Ridge, rode to Chattanooga, twelve or fifteen miles away. The whole road was filled with flying soldiers. Here and there were pieces of artillery, caissons and baggage wagons. Everything was in the greatest disorder. When I reached Chattanooga a little before four o'clock, I found Rosecrans there. The two corps commanders, McCook and Crittenden, also both came into Chattanooga."

In 10 minutes the collapse of the line is complete. The men of Van Cleave's Division and Brannan's Division are caught in a vast Confederate net forming as the exultant columns turn on both flanks. Yankee soldiers throw down their guns and flee to the rear. Bedlam reigns. Mitchell's Union cavalry drives in to try to salvage an unsalvable situation and finds itself ripped to pieces and destroyed with the units it sought to save. Panic possesses the battlefield.

As the Yankee troops break toward Snodgrass Hill, Gen. Cheatham pushes his Confederates forward with the shout, "Forward, boys, and give 'em hell." Excited Gen. Polk, who has given up his bishop's robes temporarily for Southern gray, rides close by Cheatham's side, crying, "Give 'em what Gen. Cheatham says, boys!"

Gen. Phil Sheridan's forces are panicked by the Rebel charge as are so many Federal units. Sheridan gallops away with his demoralized brigade to the edge of Chattanooga before shame overcomes his fear. Then he reforms his soldiers and rides back through Rossville toward the battlefield, but arrives too late for further action.

As the Union line collapses, on the right Wilder's Indiana brigade of mounted infantry makes the most of an investment the men have made of their own money. Not satisfied with the issue arms, the Indiana troops have bought fine repeating rifles out of their own pockets. Now, with their superior firepower, they give the illusion of a much larger force, slowing the onrush, gaining time while reinforcements gather.

Bacon and Sweet Potatoes

As thousands of prisoners and 50 pieces of artillery are gathered in by his men, Longstreet sends forth word for his troops to halt to rest. It is 2:45 p.m. Longstreet himself drops from his saddle for a well-earned, belated lunch. Sitting with Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, he savors the luxury of bacon and sweet potatoes, enjoying the meal though it is dry and the officers have nothing to wash it down. This moment is rudely shattered as through the trees screams a shell fragment from a blind and distant Yankee cannon, tearing through a book in the hands of a courier sitting in his saddle and reading, then striking Longstreet's chief of ordnance, Col. P. T. Manning. The colonel falls gasping, and the generals leap to their feet, shocked to see their friend dying before their very eyes. A large bite of sweet potato in his mouth when the shell fragment hit is lodged in his throat and he is choking. The generals pound the colonel on his back and soon he spits out the potato and gasps in richly restored air as his companions, finding his actual wound slight, roar in laughter.

Longstreet, borrowing a fill of tobacco from a passing soldier, packs it into his meerschaum pipe, and reflects upon his men's success. He is victorious "all along the line." The

enemy is beaten, but "a few are holding out on the ridge up yonder—not many, though. If we had had our Virginia army here, we could have whipped them in half the time."

But Bragg is satisfied with what his reinforced Army of Tennessee has done. "The conduct of the troops was admirable. Though often repulsed, they never failed to respond when called on, and finally carried all before them. For two weeks most of them had been without shelter, on short rations, in a country parched by drought, where drinking water was difficult to obtain; yet no murmur was heard, and all was glee and cheerfulness whenever the enemy was found."

Chickamauga's Gibraltar

Rosecrans is far from exultant. He is faint and sick. The shadow of Chickamauga is upon his white face and permeates his entire being. He stumbles from his horse, near Chattanooga, almost speechless with despair and weariness. Garfield is there, James A. Garfield, the presidency of the United States far in the future for him, a future that now seems greatly in doubt. "Garfield," mutters Rosecrans, "do you think there is any chance?" The two men fall to the ground and press their ears against the dry soil, aching to hear a rumbling message telling them their artillery is still in action, that with cannon there is some remnant of defense still standing before the gray hordes. Silence.

The two men look despairingly at each other. Rosecrans rises, and turns to Garfield. "Ride to the front. Find Gen. Thomas, if he is still alive. Tell him to cover the retreat with Granger's men. I will wire to have Cincinnati and Louisville put in order for a siege."

Cincinnati and Louisville—threatened now with Confederate siege!

Rosecrans knows who has won the battle. But Bragg does not!

Thomas has not waited for Garfield to bring Rosecrans' message. He has mounted his Gibraltar, a horseshoe-shaped little hill where a family named Snodgrass scratched out a meager living on a few cleared acres. What is left of the divisions of Brannan and Wood gather there as Thomas himself rides out from the protecting horseshoe to head off fleeing Yankee soldiers and guide them to their last stand. Two of Negley's brigades and scattered men from the corps of McCook and Crittenden halt there.

Nor does Granger wait for orders from Rosecrans. Sensing the disaster, Granger, with 5,000 men, "guided simply by the din of battle and his common sense," pushes to the battlefield from Rossville.

Longstreet suggests to Bragg that the troops on the right end of the Confederate line hesitate and form a defensive position to permit elements to come to him as reinforcements for a strong assault on Snodgrass Hill. But Bragg, thinking his army has only made a gallant attempt and not realizing the glorious victory won, shakes his head. "No." And with surly manner, "There is not a man in the right wing who has any fight left in him. They have been fought out and can do him no good," he says of Longstreet's plan.

Longstreet, receiving the message, is flabbergasted. "It is my opinion that Bragg thought at 3 p.m. that the battle was lost."

Bragg was not present to direct further advance. "General," Bragg sends word to Longstreet, "if anything happens, communicate with me at Reed's Bridge." Then the commander of the Confederate army, with success in his grasp and only a small rear guard before him, turns on his heel, mounts his horse and rides back to Chickamauga Creek, where his effort had begun two days before!

Of Life and Death

Off to the left, along the battle's fringe, wounded wearing gray and wounded wearing blue crawl in pain, seeking refuge from the heat in the tepid water of a shallow pond a mile to the south of Snodgrass Hill, where the heat of battle is focused. Into the water the men drag themselves, splashing their faces to gulp huge mouthfuls, blood from their wounds washing into the ripples. Some men die there. Others find life in the water, until it becomes deep red, a bloody pond too mixed with life and death for even wounded men to drink.

Longstreet, riding back to the fight after his exchange with Bragg, sends his troops forward in a line directly from the South, while Polk's troops from the right wing press the Yankees from the east. Between the wings of Thomas' defense facing these two Confederate forces lies a gap a half-mile wide, another inviting entrance for Longstreet, whose drive into a similar gap earlier in the day had caused the Federal collapse. But this time, the Union forces have an

ally—the dense growth of trees and brush. Though the distance between the opposing forces is small, Longstreet does not see this gap.

Gen. J. B. Kershaw, who two months before was leading his Confederates across the open fields under shot and shell in frontal assault on Gettysburg's Cemetery Ridge, knows his job. Again and again, he leads his men forward against Snodgrass Hill. Determined though the charges are, Kershaw's men, like others along the front, are thrown back by the desperate Northern defenders.

A lieutenant in the 14th Ohio is moved to compassion by the cries of the Confederate wounded before Snodgrass Hill who, having fallen victims of gunfire, now lie helpless while tongues of orange flame lick out toward them from leaves that have been ignited by exploding shells and whipped by breezes. Down the hill goes the lieutenant to help those men in gray who had been his recent targets. Leaning over, he brushes back the burning leaves from the wounded Confederates, but he has come within range of the Southern skirmishers who can see the blue uniform but do not know the mission of its wearer. A sharpshooter's bullet strikes the lieutenant in his backside and brings him down. Two of his men see their officer wounded and run forward to drag him back to his own lines, while the Union lieutenant, in the worst of humor, fumes: "The idea of a man going through two days of battle without a scratch and then, while engaged in a work of mercy, getting shot so that when he goes home on furlough he cannot tell the girls where he was shot."

Victory

All around the horseshoe of the hill, the Confederates put firm pressure on the Union lines. But stout Thomas gets more assistance. Some 1,200 men under Gen. Ferdinand Vanderveer move in from the left front. Confederate Gen. T. C. Hindman says he "had never seen Confederate troops fight better" but that he "had never seen Federal troops fight as well."

The persistent Confederates, with the taste of victory in their mouths, come firing on the run, then use bayonets and rifle butts as clubs. Longstreet, pressing forward, directs his artillery to enfilade the Yankee defenses in front of Polk's line, which is moving forward at the other side of a right angle. Before 5 p.m., Longstreet's men are at the Snodgrass house. Gen. Hill, in Polk's right wing, rides to the left

to see what troops are passing in the woods and finds Gen. Buckner's men. "The cheers that went up when the two wings met," says Hill, "were such as I never heard before and shall never hear again." Buckner gallops forward to find the "Orphan Brigade" from Kentucky, soldiers who joined the Confederacy though their state remained in the Union, cheering at the tops of their voices. "The continued cheers of the army announced at dark," he says, "that every point of the field had been gained."

Longstreet, too, is stirred by the cheering: "The two lines, nearing as they advanced, joined their continuous shouts in increasing volume, not as the burstings from the cannon's mouth, but in a tremendous swell that seemed almost to lift from their roots the great trees of the forest.

"The Army of Tennessee knows how to enjoy its first great victory."

In the backwash of exultation, the officers ride across the contested ground. Hill has never seen the dead so thick on the ground since the day of the sunken road at Fredericksburg. Confederate losses for the two days of battle are nearly 18,000 men, while the Union forces have lost some 16,500 dead and wounded. In two hours on September 20th Longstreet, now victorious, lost 44 per cent of his strength. Opposite him Steedman lost 49 per cent and Brannan lost 38 per cent in four hours. Most terrible losses have been suffered by the 10th Tennessee, with 68 per cent of its men dead or lying in bloody pain. Chickamauga Creek flows on the night of the 20th as a veritable "River of Death."

"As it was near dark," Longstreet says, "I ordered my line to remain as it was, ammunition boxes to be filled, stragglers to be collected and everything in readiness for the pursuit in the morning."

The first retreat from Snodgrass Hill had begun shortly after 4 p.m., with Thomas leaving his headquarters by 4:30 and the field being virtually cleared by 5:30 p.m. Then, at six seconds after 6 o'clock, the sun set, ringing down a red curtain on a bloody day that had begun in a blood-red mist at dawn.

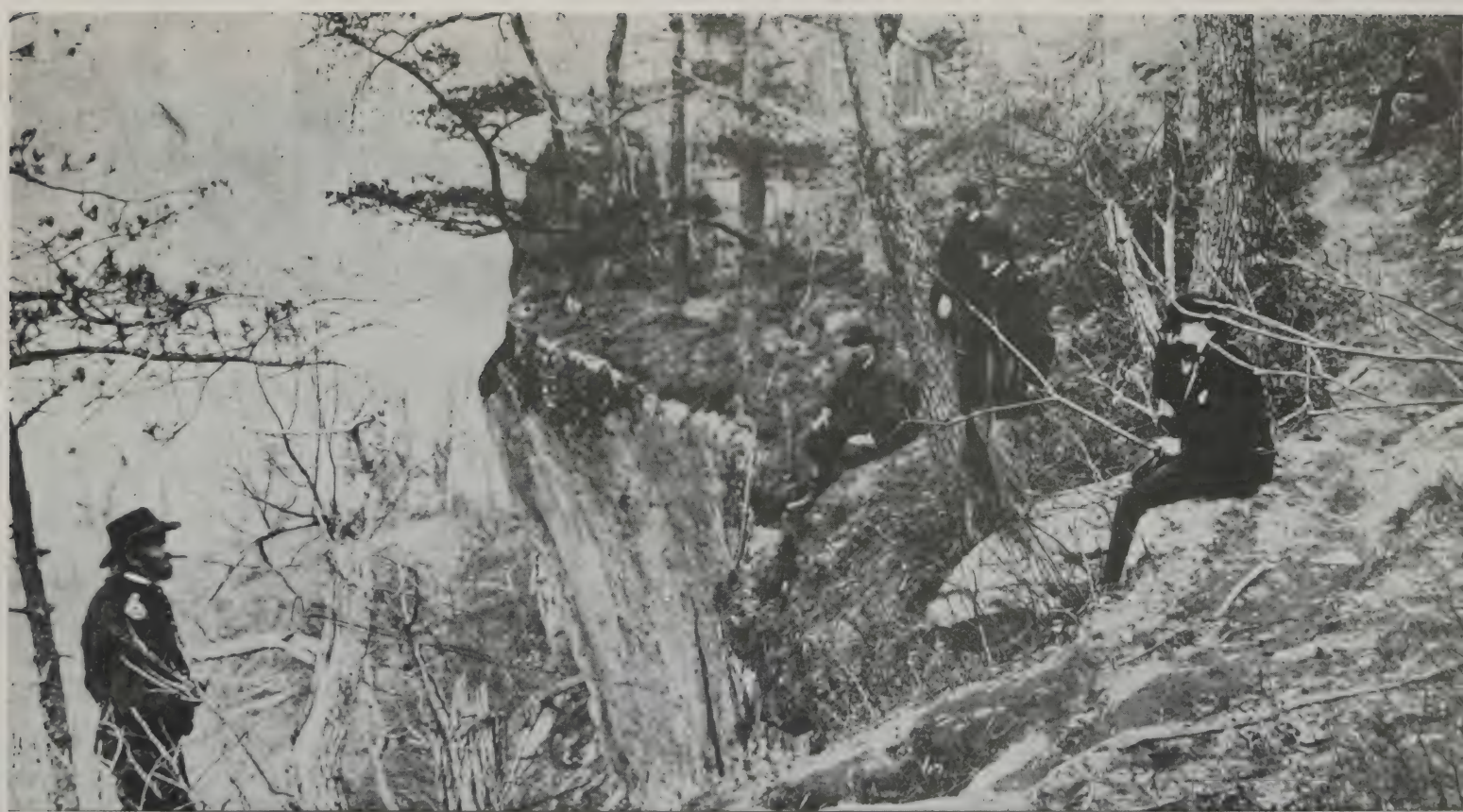
Lt. Col. Moxley Sorrel, with Longstreet, says, "It was a panic-stricken host that had fled. It was one of the greatest of the many Confederate successes. Yet there was probably only one man who did not believe that pursuit would be the word early next day, and that was our commander in chief. It is thought by some that Gen. Bragg did not even know a victory had been gained."



The northern end of Missionary Ridge, where Cleburne held Sherman at bay.



Chattanooga as seen in 1863.



Photograph by R. M. Linn

General Grant on the Point of Lookout Mountain, a few days following the Battle. Gen. J. A. Rawlings sits nearest and is facing him, with Gen. Webster standing at his back. Col. Clark Lagow, carrying a pair of field glasses, has



Chattanooga as seen in 1863.



Photograph by R. M. Linn

General Grant on the Point of Lookout Mountain, a few days following the Battle. Gen. J. A. Rawlings sits nearest and is facing him, with Gen. Webster standing at his back. Col. Clark Lagow, carrying a pair of field glasses, has arm resting on a tree. Col. William S. Hillyer, with arm resting on knee, sits near the path, and an orderly rests



Capt. John Wilson, Planting the Flag on Point Lookout, November 25, 1863.



Gen. "Fighting Joe" Hooker (seventh from left) and his Staff.

Pursuit?

Gen. Preston begs Buckner for permission to pursue the Yankees by moonlight. But with Longstreet on the field, Buckner has no authority to act, and does not order pursuit. The moon comes out bright as day as officers ride between the lines to keep the Confederate forces from mistakenly firing on each other in the night as Rebel yells ring out from hoarse throats.

"It did not occur to me on the night of the 20th," says Longstreet, "to send Bragg word of our complete success. . . . Everyone in his army was supposed to know on the night of the battle that we had won a complete victory . . . I know that I had been laying a plan by which we might overhaul the enemy at Chattanooga or between that point and Nashville."

But Polk, in command on the right, establishes headquarters on the Chattanooga road and then sends an aide to give the news to Bragg. Col. Gale, at Bragg's headquarters, says of the arrival of Polk's messenger: "Gen. Bragg had gone to bed, but got up to listen to his report of the day's work of his forces. Gen. Polk urged upon him the fact that the enemy was routed and flying precipitately from the field, and that then was the opportunity to finish the work by the capture and destruction of the army by prompt pursuit. before he had time to reorganize and throw up defenses at Chattanooga. Gen. Bragg could not be induced to look at it in that light, and refused to believe we had won a victory."

There is a wide variance of opinion as to the outcome at Chickamauga:

Says U.S. Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, "Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run."

Says Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg, "One more like this and I am ruined."

On the next morning, September 21, the only ruin the intrepid Confederate cavalrman Bedford Forrest is thinking of is that of the enemy. At 4 a.m. he is astride his horse at the head of 400 Confederate riders, moving on some Northern cavalry found hovering near Rossville. Forrest shouts, "Let's give them a dare," and a gray bugler rings out the charge. Gen. Forrest is riding at the head of the charge as the Yankees fire a volley and turn to gallop off toward Chattanooga. One bullet strikes Forrest's horse in the neck

and the blood, pumped by a great, surging heart, sprays gore back upon the general. Forrest turns his eyes from his adversary long enough to thrust his finger into the bullet hole and, leaning forward, continues the chase until the Federal troops are dispersed. He withdraws his finger and dismounts. His steed drops dead in a pool of blood, the second horse Forrest has lost at Chickamauga.

By 7 a.m., Forrest, on another horse, is at Missionary Ridge before the last of the Yankees are able to retreat. Seeing a Northern captain and another soldier up a tall pine tree used as an observation post, Forrest orders them down, takes the Yankee captain's binoculars and peers into the valley that shelters Chattanooga. Wild chaos greets his view, as stragglers rush in panic through a deluge of wrecked wagons and guns and debris.

Forrest orders one of his men to take this note:

"General—

"We are in a mile of Rossville—Have been on the Point of Missionary Ridge—Can see Chattanooga and everything around. The enemy's trains are leaving, going around the point of Lookout Mountain.

"The prisoners captured report two pontoons thrown across for the purpose of retreating.

"I think they are evacuating as hard as they can go.

"They are cutting timber down to obstruct our passage.

"I think we ought to press forward as rapidly as possible.

"Respectfully,

"N. B. Forrest

"To Gen'l Polk

"Please forward to Gen'l Bragg."

But Bragg does not move. Forrest, frantically: "Every moment lost is worth the life of a thousand men."

When still no orders come, Forrest sends his cavalry against Rossville. One of his units under McLemore gets within three miles of Chattanooga and finds itself among a mass of Federal troops before Forrest orders his men out with prisoners.

That night, Bedford Forrest is a man sick in spirit. He mounts his horse and rides through the woods to Bragg's headquarters for a direct appeal to Bragg to pursue.

Bragg is in his tent asleep. An orderly is sent to arouse him. Forrest, impassioned, presses on Bragg the helpless condition of the Union forces. If pursued at once, he says, total victory is certain.

Bragg asks how his army can move without supplies.

"Gen. Bragg, we can get all the supplies we want in Chattanooga." Bragg makes no reply. Angry Forrest turns, bends under the tent flap and stalks out into the bitter night.

The orderly comes to him. Is the army going to advance? Forrest looses a tirade of profanity, then: "I have written to him. I have sent to him. I have given him information of the condition of the Federal army." His words give way once more to profanity. "What does he fight battles for?"

The next day, September 22nd, Forrest takes matters into his own hands, assembling his whole cavalry corps on Missionary Ridge, descending into Chattanooga Valley, driving the Union infantry and cavalry pickets to within half a mile of Chattanooga.

A thin gray line goes forward on foot to force the Union retreat, and Forrest takes up positions covering roads to Rossville and to Cleveland and around the point of Lookout Mountain.

Then, in magnificent bravado, Forrest sends in riders under flags of truce with a demand: "Unconditional surrender."

Confederate Gen. McLaws comes up on picket duty and is astounded when Forrest comes to him at his headquarters and proposes that they join and attack the Federals. But Gen. McLaws is unwilling to assume such great responsibility without orders.

The next day, Forrest's tired men, the brave and undaunted few who have challenged the entire Federal army, come back exhausted, the ribs showing through the hides of their shoeless horses.

Opportunity and Forrest have knocked, but Bragg has not answered.

To Mrs. Lincoln

The next day in Washington, Abraham Lincoln sits down in the White House to perform a family task. He must write to his wife, who is visiting in New York, about the

husband of her sister, Mrs. Ben Helm, who had brought down vituperation on Mrs. Lincoln as "that Rebel woman in the White House." The President sends his message by telegraph:

"War Department

"Sept. 24, 1863, 9:55 a.m.

"Mrs. A. Lincoln

"Fifth Ave. Hotel, New York:

"We now have a tolerably accurate summing up of the late battle between Rosecrans and Bragg. The result is that we are worsted, if at all, only in the fact that we, after main fighting was over, yielded the ground, thus leaving considerable of our artillery and wounded to fall into the enemy's hands, for which we got nothing in turn. We lost in general officers, 1 killed and 3 or 4 wounded, while according to the rebel accounts which we have, they lost 6 killed and 8 wounded. Of the killed, 1 major-general and 5 brigadiers, including your brother-in-law, Helm; and of the wounded, 3 major-generals and 5 brigadiers. This list may be reduced 2 in number by corrections of confusion in names. At 11:40 a.m. yesterday, Gen. Rosecrans telegraphed from Chattanooga: 'We hold this point, and I cannot be dislodged except by very superior numbers and after a great battle.' A dispatch leaving there after night says, 'No fight today.'

"A. Lincoln."

Siege

Rosecrans is on the telegraph again. "I will wire to have Cincinnati and Louisville put in order for a siege." And to Washington: "We have met with a serious disaster; extent not yet ascertained . . . (The) enemy overwhelmed us." And to Lincoln: ". . . After two days of the severest fighting I ever witnessed, our left and center were beaten. The left held its position until sunset . . . our loss is heavy and our troops worn down. We have no certainty of holding our position here."

To his superiors he owes the reports. But he need not have bothered Cincinnati and Louisville.

The soldiers tell this story: A Confederate had been captured by the Yanks and taken to Chattanooga in the retreat, but disorder made it easy for him to slip away and run down the dirt road into the woods and make his way back to his outfit. "Captain," he reported, "the enemy is run-

ning; they are in retreat." The captain, excited, took him to Bragg, the old soldiers said, and the escapee repeated his story, then was cut off sharply by Bragg: "Do you know what a retreat looks like?" The soldier, with the informality that was commonplace, shot back, "I ought to know, General. I've been with you during your whole campaign."

Bragg does not go backward this time, but he does not go forward. The fleeing Federals look back over their shoulders, eyes wide with fear, looking for pursuers who will slay them or capture them and make disaster complete.

But pursuers are not there. So the blue current around the foot of Lookout Mountain subsides and ebbs. The Northern soldiers stand amid the wreckage of war and look up as their gray adversaries array themselves to the East along the barrier of Missionary Ridge, running their military fence to the banks of the winding Tennessee River. From the South end of the ridge, near Chickamauga, Confederates extend rifle pits and picket lines westward to Lookout Mountain. Then, upon the slopes and point of the mountain, Rebel forces position their guns. Instead of pursuit there is siege. The showdown is not now, but ahead.

Behind the gray lines all is not well. Soldiers victorious but denied fruits of victory are unhappy men. They growl and grumble about the general who denies pursuit and allows the enemy to stop and lick his wounds. Longstreet, Hill and Polk, bitter and frustrated, share their complaints against Bragg. With surliness born of frustration, the three generals meet together and decide Longstreet shall write Secretary of War Seddon, and Gen. Lee; Polk will write directly to President Davis. The tone is clear and ominous, Longstreet telling Seddon:

"Our chief has done but one thing that he ought to have done since I joined the army—that was to order the attack upon the 20th. All other things that he has done he ought not to have done. I am convinced that nothing but the hand of God can save us or help us as long as we have our present commander."

Gen. Longstreet's feeling is strong. But perhaps even he does not realize how prophetic his letter is to be.

A woman sits and longs for her loved husband away at the battlefield in a war that it seems may never cease. The emptiness is more than physical absence. The haunting void may be filled, for a while, by just a word that might come in a letter to be read and reread not so much for what

it says but for the spirit of the man who sent it. Mrs. Polk seizes the letter that comes from her Bishop-General husband and runs her eyes across its penned lines. There are words of resentment and exasperation that the Chickamauga victory has not been translated into real gain. "The troops are in fine spirits," the husband writes. "We shall make a forward movement in a few days, I think." It was more hope than conviction on the part of Gen. Leonidas Polk.

Starvation

On Missionary Ridge, where Bragg has his headquarters, a Confederate private pours out his complaint. "In all the history of the war, I cannot remember of more privation and hardships than we went through at Missionary Ridge... The soldiers were starved and almost naked, and covered all over with lice and camp itch and filth and dirt. The men looked sick, hollow-eyed and heart-broken, living principally on parched corn which had been picked up out of the mud and dirt under the feet of officers' horses. We thought of nothing but starvation."

The men on the other side, in blue, share this thought. They are on half rations, at first. Then they have their food allotments cut in half again and belts need new holes in them to hold up scarecrows' pants that once had been brave blue and bright over muscular legs.

Armed guards are at the feeding troughs to keep soldiers from stealing the too-small ration given the mules and horses. So short is food, many of the animals are sent back to Bridgeport, Ala., where river and rail shipping permit accumulation of plenty, which is barred from Chattanooga by the watchful gray soldiers on the mountaintops and passes. But many of the mules and horses are denied escape even that way. Chattanooga becomes a graveyard for livestock and the trail to Bridgeport is marked by decaying carcasses and broken wagons. Ten thousand horses and mules die, and cannon remain in out-of-the-way places because they lack the animals to move them.

To natural death, the Confederates add a calculated cause. Gen. Joe Wheeler, with 4,000 cavalry, sweeps to the North, fording the Tennessee River and moving into Sequatchie Valley where a caravan of 800 Federal wagons winds its way in desperate effort to bring stores into Chattanooga. The wagons make tinder for a furious snake of fire,

and 4,000 mules are slaughtered. A running battle day after day wreaks more damage upon the troubled Union until Wheeler's force is so disorganized and weakened by attrition it is forced to withdraw.

Forrest's Showdown

To make possible this effort, Bragg sacrifices one of the greatest resources of his army—Nathan Bedford Forrest. To assemble the raiding party for Wheeler, sluggard Bragg orders fighter Forrest to turn his troops over to Joe Wheeler, without explaining why. To a frustrated Forrest, who without any formal military training is proving himself one of the greatest generals on either side, this is too much. When the order from Bragg comes through, uninhibited Bedford Forrest dashes off a protest to his commander, charging him "in plain straight language with duplicity and lying." And furthermore, he says, he will come to Bragg's headquarters to repeat this allegation to Bragg's face. The intrepid, angered Forrest laughs mirthlessly as his courier rides away and mutters, "Bragg never before got such a letter as that from a brigadier."

And as good as his word, Forrest seeks out his friend and chief surgeon, Dr. J. B. Cowan, and bids him ride with him from East Tennessee to Missionary Ridge where Bragg's tent overlooks the Union Army in the great bowl-like valley around the town of Chattanooga.

Forrest, upon arrival, wastes no time. Bragg stretches forth his hand. A hard-visaged Forrest declines it. "I am not here to pass civilities or compliments with you, but on other business," he snaps to his commander. "You commenced your cowardly and contemptible persecution of me soon after the battle of Shiloh, and you have kept it up ever since. You did it because I reported to Richmond facts, while you reported damned lies . . . You have played the part of a damned scoundrel, and are a coward, and if you were any part of a man I would slap your jaws and force you to resent it. You may as well not issue any more orders to me, for I will not obey them." Abruptly he swings on the ball of his foot, turning his back on a still speechless Bragg, and walks to his horse. He mounts and rides off, and does not stop until he has sought out President Davis, to whom he unburdens himself, with the result that Davis transfers Forrest to West Tennessee to raise an independent command by the direct and unorthodox means of taking equipment from the enemy

and giving it to farm boys to whom the name of Forrest is magic and marvel and manliness.

Forrest's spirit is what the Army of Tennessee needs in its commander. But there is no place for such as Forrest under the command of Bragg.

'Round Robin'

Bedford Forrest is not the only Confederate displeased with the lethargy, and worse, of Braxton Bragg. On October 4, nearly all the top Confederate officers at Chattanooga come together with no hesitation about stating their disgust. The meeting generates more than heat. A "round robin" petition is drafted and sent off to President Davis. "Two weeks ago," the insubordinate officers write, "this army, elated by a great victory which promised to prove the most fruitful of the war, was in readiness to pursue its defeated enemy. That enemy, driven in confusion from the field, was fleeing in panic-stricken disorder across the Tennessee River. Today, after having been twelve days in line of battle in that enemy's front, within cannon range of his position, the Army of Tennessee has seen a new Sebastopol rise steadily before its view . . . Whatever may have been accomplished heretofore, it is certain that the fruits of the victory of the Chickamauga have now escaped our grasp.

"The Army of Tennessee, stricken with a complete paralysis, will in a few days' time be thrown strictly on the defensive, and may deem itself fortunate if it escapes from its present position without disaster."

If Bragg does not know the truth, his subordinates do. Recommending Bragg's removal from command, the generals admit concerning their petition that "the proceeding is unusual among military men," but "the extraordinary condition of affairs in this army, the magnitude of the interests at stake, and a sense of the responsibilities under which they rest to Your Excellency and to the Republic, render this proceeding, in their judgment, a matter of solemn duty from which, as patriots, they cannot shrink."

President Davis is properly alarmed. He boards a train for Chattanooga. Arriving at Chickamauga Station, to the East of the battle line along Missionary Ridge, he is greeted by a crowd of soldiers shouting for a speech. A horse is brought forth. President Davis, in long civilian coat, mounts to ride to Bragg's headquarters a half dozen miles away. The

President doffs his hat and raises his voice, "Man never spoke as you did on the field of Chickamauga, and in your presence I dare not speak. Yours is the voice that will win the independence of your country and strike terror to the heart of a ruthless foe." He spurs off to meet Bragg. But there Davis does the unbelievable. He summons the petitioning generals to Bragg's headquarters and calls on them to repeat to Bragg's face their complaints and assessment of Bragg's unfitness to command. Then there is talk about what course the army should follow, with a wide variety of plans offered. Bragg and Davis ride down the ridge and across the valley, making their way to the top of Lookout Mountain, whence they look down and Davis declaims: "Before another week that army is my own." One of the staff, looking down on the river winding in huge Moccasin Bend on the valley floor, panoplied with the brilliance of fall foliage, ecstatically remarks, "Fine view."

"But a poor prospect," mutters Longstreet, more realistic than his President and less aesthetically inclined than the staff officer.

New Commander

Events are moving to make the prospect even poorer for the Confederates.

Ulysses S. Grant, still glowing with victory won in July at Vicksburg, is ordered to Cairo, Illinois, then to the Galt House in Louisville to meet an officer of the War Department for consultation. En route, at Indianapolis, Grant steps forth on the station platform to stretch his legs. A distinguished-looking, frock-coated gentleman strides across the platform and seizes the hand of a by-stander, "Gen. Grant?" With embarrassment, the by-stander disengages his hand. No, he is not Gen. Grant. Someone then identifies Grant and, sheepishly, the U.S. Secretary of War himself, Edwin M. Stanton, greets the general. After a talk, Grant is assigned to the command in Chattanooga, succeeding the luckless Rosecrans. The conference coming to a close, Grant shocks Stanton by embarking upon his new assignment by going off promptly with a party to the theater.

While the Confederates and Federals are concerned with the problems of command, almost fraternization exists on the front lines between the drawling boys from the South and the twanging soldiers from the Middle West. Union Gen.

Manderson rides near the front, inspecting his picket lines. Confederate reserves turn out in formation, pop to attention and salute as the blue-clad officer passes.

"Hey, Yank, want some food?" The Confederates willingly share their own meager rations with the enemy soldiers in their trap. But when Northern boats come up the river bringing food and other supplies, it is a different story, less personal. Confederate cannon bombard and sink the boats without hesitation.

One night, a Confederate picket officer sounds off. "Hello there, Yank. Have you got any coffee over there?"

"Yes," Maj. Nelson of Indiana answers. "Yes, come over and get some."

"We would like to come, but there are 14 of us on this post."

"All right, Johnny, bring them all along. We'll divide with you. Come over, boys, and get your coffee."

A moment later, 14 Rebel soldiers slide into the dirt pit, smilingly accept coffee and sit and swap yarns with the Yankees. Time flies past and war and death drift far away.

Maj. Nelson looks at his watch. "It's time for you Johnnies to get away from here. The inspector will be along soon, and he will put every one of you in prison, and me, too, if he catches us at this business."

The Confederates jump up. "Good night, Yanks. We are greatly obliged to you. We have had a nice visit and enjoyed your coffee very much. We hope you will get a good rest tonight. We are going to give you hell tomorrow."

Darkness swallows up the departing gray and butternut.

Here the armies lie, facing each other under the sun and fall rains, short on food, low on supplies and ammunition, with death close by and the stench of decaying animals filling the air, with battles behind and battles ahead and peace a word rarely uttered.

Meanwhile, the Chickamauga battlefield is visited by a foreign observer and Confederate officers. The Yankee dead lie still unburied, putrid, rooted by hogs allowed to run half wild, an object of interest to foul carrion birds and animals. Naked of shoes stripped off by barefooted Confederates, the bodies lie in cordwood piles, while leaders of both armies consider new ways of creating new piles of dead in the grisly business that is at hand.

Reinforcements

Grant is not to be left to do his job at Chattanooga singlehandedly. "The first week of October," relates Gen. Oliver O. Howard, "two divisions of the 11th and 20th Corps, under Gen. Hooker, were transferred from the Army of the Potomac to the western theater of war, and I being one of Hooker's commanders, found myself on the same train with Gen. Grant. He sat near the rear of the car, and I passed on at once to pay my respects to him. Without rising he extended his hand, smiled pleasantly and signified very briefly that it gave him pleasure to meet me.

"Grant and staff went on with me to Bridgeport, where I was not a little anxious concerning my ability to entertain properly the distinguished guests."

Grant is still lame as a result of a fall from his horse while reviewing troops in New Orleans with the benefit of previous liquid celebration. Howard continues: "After a sunrise breakfast Gen. Rawlins lifted his general, as if he had been a child, into the saddle. The direct route across the Tennessee was held by Confederate Bragg, and the river road by way of Jasper, on our side, was exposed to sharpshooters from the other bank and to Confederate Joseph Wheeler's spasmodic raids. Yet almost without escort Grant risked the journey along the river through Jasper, across swollen streams, through deep mud and along roads that were already too wretched for wagons."

Grant stops for lunch at a village in Sequatchie Valley along the way, then remounts and rides on. The second day, the trail leads over Walden's Ridge, the point of which, Signal Mountain, is an outpost for Confederates. Along treacherous paths and Anderson Road he progresses by the hardest. "The soldiers carried him in their arms across the roughest places," says Gen. Howard. Another fall when his horse slips proves further hindrance. "Yielding to no weariness or suffering, however," Howard relates, "he pushed through to Chattanooga, reaching Gen. Thomas on Oct. 23."

Grant is a tired man, who has to be lifted from the saddle, wet, hungry and bruised. Thomas and Grant immediately sit down together on opposite sides of a roaring fire, puddles forming where drops of water congregate from Gen. Grant's soggy clothing. In the front, where the fire's heat penetrates, wisps of steam rise from the blue-black uniform. Finally, when Gen. Thomas makes no such suggestion, Gen. James H. Wilson speaks up, "Gen. Thomas, Gen. Grant is

wet, hungry and in pain. His wagons and camp equipage are far behind. Can you not find quarters and some dry clothes for him, and direct your officers to provide his party with supper?" But Grant tosses the suggestion aside.

As Grant finds the weather does not welcome him in his new command, so some of the army are less than exuberant. "The Army of the Cumberland," says Union Lt. Col. John Atkinson, "was not enthusiastic about Gen. Grant. They had heard of his great victories but knew less of him than those who had been at home and had read the papers. His appointment from another army seemed to be a reflection on their own. When he came to Chattanooga, he was crippled. His leg had been hurt by his horse falling. He was thin, and wore a look of intense anxiety on his face. He wore his uniform more like a civilian than a graduate of West Point. His military coat was never buttoned up to the neck. He sat his horse carelessly, although securely. He walked with his head down and without the slightest suggestion of a military step. Neither his face nor his figure was imposing."

'Baldy' Welcomes Him

But there is at least one, and perhaps the most important one, who foresees great events in the arrival of the new leader. Gen. W. F. (Baldy) Smith, a squarefaced engineer whose nickname is derived from the obvious, writes his wife: "Grant is here, and tomorrow I feel that this torpid animal of an army will wake up and move."

The next day, indeed, Grant and Smith ride to the river where Smith takes advantage of a previous riverside ride. Earlier in the month, Gen. Smith, Gen. Rosecrans and Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana had started out together toward the river. Rosecrans and Dana, however, stopped at the military hospital and Smith rode on. He was on the north bank of the Tennessee and cut across the ankle of the famed Moccasin Bend, which got its name from the form of the narrow peninsula contained by the sharp twisting of the river as its course is circuitously deflected by the heights. Smith crossed the ankle and was ready to turn his horse to ride back to Chattanooga when he saw a Confederate battery across the river. He inquired of Union pickets and was told it covered Brown's Ferry, and was rarely fired. Smith rode to the river's bank, dismounted and tied his horse. The better part of the next two hours he spent sitting on the shore peering through field glasses at the opposite

bank. Then he mounted his horse and rode back to Chattanooga.

Today, with Grant, Gen. Smith has a new opportunity to sell his plan that Thomas had previously declined to accept—a plan to break the siege. Thomas had said, “I have been conferring with some generals about your plan, and they say it is in contravention of the art of war and would not succeed . . . that you are a broken-down general from the East who wishes notoriety at any cost, and that your plans would cause the destruction of two of our best brigades.”

Today Gen. Smith makes his proposal with new hope to Grant—and receives approval!

Amphibious Warfare

Gen. Smith's plan is indeed a novel one—it is amphibious warfare, and at night. In the darkness of October 26, 1,500 of Maj. Gen. William B. Hazen's men gather at the edge of Chattanooga, then slide down the river's muddy banks to take their places in the 50 waiting bridge pontoons to be used as landing craft and the two flatboats moored at the landing. Strong hands seize the four oars provided to propel each pontoon, while a steersman takes a fifth oar to guide the craft from the rear.

In the preparations, logs had been sent down the river to estimate the time required for the current to sweep the boats silently the nine miles around Moccasin Bend and the foot of Lookout Mountain, where Confederate pickets' eyes seek to pierce the night.

Where Indian war canoes once had plied the muddy waters, the Federal armada now floats in silence, lest the Confederates hear resounding noises or whispered words and give warning. The moon is shining, but across the water wisps of mist help obscure the nocturnal invaders.

Without mishap, the passage is accomplished until, just above Brown's Ferry, the amphibious soldiers make out a signal fire burning on the right bank where Union reinforcements lie in readiness to join the attack. Steersmen turn the boats across the river. One of the pontoons misses its appointed landing and gives warning to the Confederates at the ferry. But quickly the other pontoons make their landing and the outnumbered defenders are quickly driven back. Then the pontoons cross the river quickly and from the

shore directly opposite the ferry bring more of Hazen's men, who secure the ferry.

But Brown's Ferry is only the beginning, the broken thread that is to make possible the unraveling of the whole fabric of Confederate defenses and save the Northern Army from surrender.

Farther down the river, at Bridgeport, U.S. Gen. Joe Hooker is moving. "Just after dark on October 27, 1863," Confederate Col. William C. Oates reports, "a courier brought me a message that a heavy force of the enemy was attempting to cross the river near Bridgeport. A reinforcement of two army corps had been sent from the Army of the Potomac under 'Fighting Joe' Hooker. These were the troops which were reported as in the act of crossing. On receiving the message I forwarded it, together with my apprehension that an attack on me was imminent, to Gen. Longstreet, with the request to send reinforcements without delay. The courier returned before midnight and stated that he had delivered my communication and had a receipt for it. No other response came.

"Some time before day a courier informed me that the Yankees were crossing the river near by and had driven a company away from Brown's Ferry. I had the long roll beaten, mounted my horse, and we moved off as rapidly as possible. Along the river at Brown's Ferry there is a ridge or little mountain. The gap through this leads to the ferry. When within twenty steps of it, I heard the invaders at work building breastworks. I came near riding into them. I then detailed two companies to walk right up to the foe, and for every man to place the muzzle of his rifle against the body of a Yankee when he fired. I waited in breathless silence, but when they did fire it must have done terrible execution, judging from the confusion of the enemy which followed.

"My companies got inside their works and drove them, capturing eleven prisoners. But the Federal line to my right fired on us heavily, and to meet this, I deployed another company and put it into action. I put in one company after another, until all six of my reserves were into it, and still I could not cover the enemy's front. I next sent a courier down the river to withdraw my other five companies and to bring them as speedily as possible, as I was contending with a force greatly superior to my own.

"About this time Gen. Law arrived with three regiments and the Texas Brigade. I told him it was too late, that a heavy force had already crossed the river.

"To give up the river and that valley utterly destroyed Bragg's policy by raising the siege of Chattanooga. Gen. Longstreet had committed the defense of this valley (and the maintenance of the siege) to Law's brigade and never had ridden through it to see if Law was doing it. He and Law had become estranged, and the latter did not care whether he aided Longstreet in anything. Bragg, too, never had gone into that valley to see what was going on."

'Move on Them'

Late the next morning, Northern soldiers looking up across the face of Lookout Mountain see two men on horseback. Spread before the horsemen is a vista of gold and red fall leaves. But the horsemen are not admiring the view. Gen. Bragg is chewing out Gen. Longstreet for "sending up false alarms" about Yankee forces in the neighborhood of Bridgeport moving toward Chattanooga. Before Longstreet can reply, up dashes one of Longstreet's dispatch riders, reporting the advance of a large body of enemy infantry and artillery in Lookout Valley at the western base of the mountain. Bragg turns on the messenger and berates him for being sensational. "General," the soldier answers, "if you will ride to a point on the west side of the mountain I will show them to you." Spurs are pressed in horses' flanks and the three riders advance to the edge of the mountain's narrow plateau top. There, in the valley, Hooker's men form a long blue line heading toward Brown's Ferry, where the Northern forces of Hazen are building a pontoon bridge to open the "Cracker Line" that makes possible the overland haul from Bridgeport to Chattanooga, giving new lifeblood to Grant's army.

Gen. Bragg turns to Gen. Longstreet: "Let our troops move on them this very night and capture or annihilate them." Gen. Bragg promises help: two divisions to work on Hooker's rear guard, commanded by Gen. Geary. But bungling Bragg sends only one division—without bothering to notify Longstreet of the change in plans.

Though Bragg is not cooperative, the Northern general unintentionally is. Gen. Hooker, having hurried to Chattanooga from the Army of the Potomac in the longest, largest and quickest transfer of a major body of troops in the war, is tired. He tells his men to camp for the night. Five thousand men throw down their blankets and unhitch their mules a mile short of Brown's Ferry. Fifteen hundred others camp

near the little creek at Wauhatchie, an Indian name meaning "small stream."

Wauhatchie

Down the mountainside under cover of darkness the Confederates steal. Then Rebel yells send shivers down Northern spines. Down the slope, at a run now, the Confederates go, crossing sharp ravines, into the fray against the camped foe. But the Yankees rise, grab their guns and fire. At a little bridge across the creek they hold long enough to slow the Confederates and draw their lines. By 1 a.m., October 29, the full weight of Confederate forces hits and all is turmoil and confusion. To the yells, the crash of guns and the shouting of orders is added the braying of frightened mules. Cannon flashes and reports in the night panic the mules and teamsters flee to the rear, leaving the animals to run free and wild in the darkness. The mules, some hitched to wagons, dash blindly, crashing into Confederate and Yankee lines with utter disregard for the colors of uniforms they cannot see. An entire Northern regiment is ripped apart by the fear-crazed charge of the animals, and Confederates, thinking the animals are part of a cavalry attack, are thrown into disorder and dismay.

But the lines reform and the battle continues. By 3 a.m., Union soldiers are so low on ammunition they are picking the pockets of their fallen comrades. Confederate Gen. Longstreet, halfway down the mountainside, urges his troops on. But the urging is not enough. By 4 a.m. the Confederates begin to give ground and pull back to their original position. They have lost the Battle of Wauhatchie.

As the Confederate stragglers begin to come back from the battle, a Southern major sees an Irishman bearing a small form on his shoulders. "Who is that you're carrying out?" the officer shouts. "Billy Bethune, sir," the Irishman answers. Little Billy had come up from Columbus, Ga., to beg a gun to fight Yankees. He is only 14. And Confederate officers tell him to wait. But finally they can say no no longer and Billy gets his gun and goes forward to fight at Wauhatchie. And now he is coming back, borne on the shoulders of a fellow soldier. "How is he wounded?" the officer inquires. "He is shot in the back, sir," the burdened soldier answers. But then the voice of little Billy rings out indignantly on the night air. "Major, he's a liar. I'm not shot in the back, I'm just shot *across* the back."



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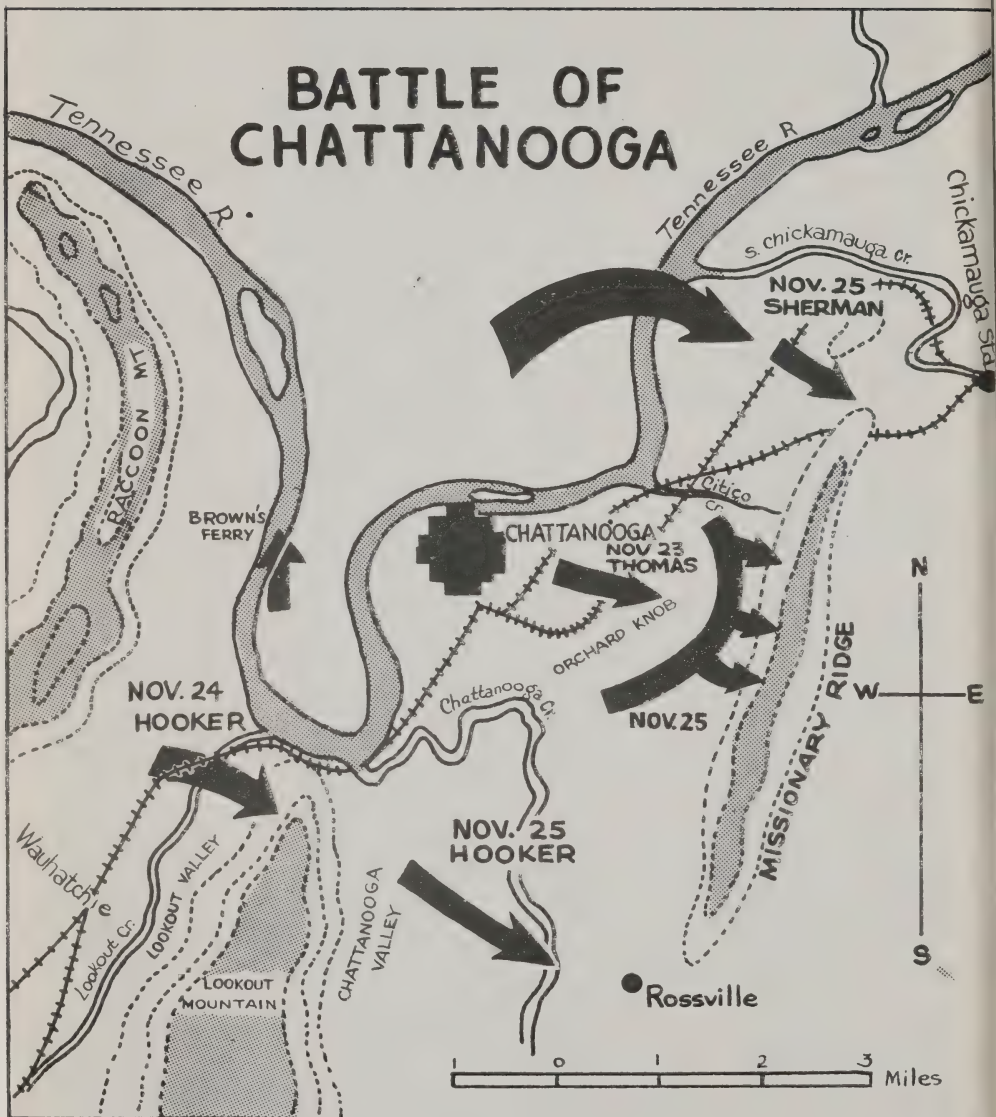
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The slope of Missionary Ridge, up which Thomas' men charged to victory.

BATTLE OF CHATTANOOGA



Time

After Wauhatchie, Gen. Grant telegraphs Washington: "If the Rebels give me one week more time I think all danger of losing territory now held by us will have passed away and preparations may commence for offensive operations."

A beaten, starving, disorganized army no longer is on the run. The tables are turned and the blue army, recently at bay, is ready to turn on its tormentors.

The Rebels give Grant plenty of time. Unimaginative Gen. Bragg has nothing in mind but to wait to see what the Yankees will do. A month passes, and while Grant is reinforced by troops marching in along the "Cracker Line," Bragg weakens his Confederate forces by sending Longstreet and his 15,000 off to fight at Knoxville, against Gen. Ambrose Burnside. Somehow Bragg thinks Grant will not move. But he underestimates his opponent, a dangerous mistake in war.

On the surface, all looks very peaceful. So close are the lines of the opposing armies, band music rings back and forth, with the opposing musicians alternating selections. At Chattanooga Creek, a little way from the eastern base of Lookout Mountain, the narrow, winding stream is all that separates Northern and Southern outposts. Missionary Ridge, being rapidly denuded by axe crews seeking materials for breastworks and firewood, is in plain view of Grant's army spread in the valley below. Grant himself rides up to a spring used by both armies in a narrow no man's land, and surprises a young Confederate soldier getting a drink there. The Confederate jumps to attention. General and private have a chat, then exchanging salutes, each goes his own way.

But this is not time wasted. The Northern army is growing stronger while the Southern is growing weaker. As Longstreet moves away, Gen. Grant is calling for still more men.

Wm. Tecumseh Sherman

William Tecumseh Sherman, who had been a schoolmaster in Louisiana before the war, is watching his men repair a railroad bridge near Tusculum, Alabama, when he is approached by a dirty, black-haired messenger with word from Gen. Grant: "Drop all work on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, cross the Tennessee and hurry east-

ward with all possible dispatch towards Bridgeport, till you meet further orders from me." The message had been sent some 200 miles, care of Cpl. Pike, a noted Union scout.

To find out about such things, a detachment of Confederate scouts under Capt. Coleman is operating behind the lines to discover Grant's strength and whether reinforcements are moving to his aid. Returning from their reconnaissance, a number of the Confederates are captured and thrown into jail. Union soldiers search their belongings, and in the saddlebags of one, young Sam Davis, a Tennessean only 21 years old, are scarce items: three cakes of soap and three toothbrushes. He was taking them to Gen. Bragg himself as a coveted gift. In the seat of Sam Davis' saddle, the searchers make a shocking discovery, a map and description of Nashville's defenses. Though Sam wears a Confederate gray uniform and is a regularly enlisted member of the 1st Tennessee Regiment, he is charged with being a spy. A military commission gives the fact that he is a soldier little consideration, and sentences Sam Davis to death by hanging.

But that does not solve the Union's problems. So accurate is Sam Davis' information about Nashville, the Northern officers are certain someone in their midst, perhaps in their own headquarters, is in league with the Confederates. An officer tells Sam there is a way he may save his life. Tell who gave him the information and he may escape hanging, the boy is urged. But Sam keeps his mouth shut.

Meanwhile, on Grant's order, Sherman sends his men by train, then on foot, until they arrive at Bridgeport on November 13. Sherman rushes on ahead to Chattanooga to see Grant and discover the role in store for him.

Grant smiles, and shakes hands with Sherman, complimenting him on the speed of his movement. Grant lights a cigar and hands one to Sherman, points to a high-backed rocking chair. "Take the chair of honor, Sherman," Grant says affectionately, displaying an easy informality his other officers are not accustomed to. "Oh, no," says Sherman, "that belongs to you, General."

"I don't forget," says the 41-year-old Grant to 43-year-old Sherman, "to give proper respect to age."

"Well then," replies Sherman, "if you put it on that ground, I must accept."

Grant's Temptation

Brother officers drop in on Sherman that night at Thomas' headquarters, and find the newly-arrived general is not ignorant of the local situation. He has thought the problem out in detail on horseback. After a little talk, Sherman excuses himself, goes into another room and returns with a bottle of whisky, which he puts on the table.

"I was shocked," Baldy Smith says, "for I knew that Sherman must surely be aware of Grant's weakness and of Rawlins' ceaseless vigilance to keep temptation away. Some of the officers helped themselves and for a while Grant himself abstained, until I thought the danger was over. He, however, could not endure to the end, but got up and took a drink."

Angry Baldy Smith, counting so on a clear-headed general to lead the Union army out of investment, stomps out of the room and goes next door to his own quarters.

A little later, some of Smith's officers, breaking their commander's rules against late cardplaying in his headquarters, are shocked when the door to the room where they are gambling rattles. Surely Smith has come and they are discovered. But they are quickly relieved. Instead of an angry Smith, it is a tipsy Grant rattling the door. Says Smith, "As soon as they saw his condition, they got over the scare and guided him to my room."

Gen. John A. Rawlins, on Grant's staff, is quite as aware as Gen. Smith that his commander has another enemy besides the Confederates. He sits down sadly to write a letter to his fiancée, Miss Mary Emma Hurlbut, Danbury, Conn., to break the news that he feels the leave he had hoped would come soon and make possible their marriage must, in the interests of the nation, be delayed: "Today . . . matters have changed and the necessity of my presence here made almost absolute by the free use of intoxicating liquors at headquarters, which last night's developments showed me had reached to the General commanding. I am the only one here (his wife not being with him) who can stay it in that direction and prevent evil consequences resulting from it. I had hoped, but it appears vainly, his New Orleans experience would prevent him ever again indulging with this, his worst enemy."

Emma Hurlbut replies: "It was with the deepest regret that I heard of this again yielding to the temptation, that the poisonous serpent is again encircling him in his deadly

folds. How can he in his high position holding the lives of 10,000 in his hands and when so much depends on him, how dare he do anything that would render him incompetent or unfit for the important duties of his position? It is truly honorable if you can try to stop the destruction which threatens him. It is your duty to remain."

Thus relieved by the fine lady's assurances, Gen. Rawlins goes conscientiously about his task of wrestling with the temptation that Grant preferred to succumb to rather than wrestle.

Orchard Knob

John Barleycorn is not, however, the only serpent that encircles Grant. Riding out on a reconnaissance of the lines, Sherman turns to Grant, "Why, Gen. Grant, you are besieged." "It is too true," the commander replies. Sherman turns back toward his troops and rushes them from Bridgeport, crossing at Kelly's Ferry on the Tennessee River, then moving them across to Brown's Ferry, leading them secretly behind a row of hills high enough to hide the movement and deceive the Confederates about the arrival of these veterans from Vicksburg who join the reinforcements from Gettysburg supporting the Union Army of the Cumberland.

As the blue storm clouds gather behind the horizon, Gen. Bragg, oblivious of danger, sends Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner and his men to reinforce Longstreet, already departed for Knoxville. It is November 22.

The next day the fateful battle begins. East of Chattanooga on a hill overlooking a cut where the railroad passes, Yankee forces have constructed Fort Wood. A mile away, on another hill, a Confederate force sits on Orchard Knob, a round hill rising as an outpost before Missionary Ridge, which stands fortresslike to bar the Northern advance. Rebels on Orchard Knob have soft duty. They loll in the warm November sunshine, take their turns at guard duty and daily watch the Yanks at Fort Wood as they answer the bugle's call and fall out for regular drill. On November 23 it is much the same as it had been the days before. The bugle sounds. The blue lines form while Confederates jeer. But today the Union soldiers are not on aimless drill. The Northern soldiers march away to pay an earnest call on Orchard Knob, surprising the Confederate pickets. The Union movement is supposed to be only a reconnaissance, but it takes the lines of the surprised Confederates.

"It will have a bad effect to let them come back and try it over again," Gen. Rawlins suggests. Grant makes a decision: "Entrench them and send up support." So the Union line moves forward, facing mighty Missionary Ridge, and anchored by Orchard Knob in the center.

To Missionary Ridge

But Orchard Knob is only the beginning. During the night of November 23, Sherman's corps, forming the disguised left (and northernmost) flank of Grant's army, moves from its hideout behind rugged hills north of Chattanooga and crouches in brush and darkness on the bank of the Tennessee River facing toward the plain on the other side that stretches to the northern end of Missionary Ridge. In a creek nearby, 116 crude wooden pontoons lie in hiding. The army is hungry but excited. Midnight finds the soldiers still awake in the silent blackness, and by 2 a.m. a faint splashing reaches alert ears. Against the black of night loom blacker shapes as the boats, propelled by oars muffled by tow-sacks tied to their blades, scrape along the shore. Each man grabs his rifle. Many have shovels besides, and two by two the soldiers creep to the river's bank. A tall man swathed in shadowy raincoat stands near the boats. Most of the soldiers do not recognize Sherman's voice as he softly says, "There's room for 30 in a boat." But those who know him spread the word, and excitement is heightened as the men learn their commander is with them.

A few minutes later, the boats are in the current, with thousands of men in midstream before the complacent enemy. There is no motion, no sound but the swishing oars and the dripping water. In the darkness, thousands crawl out of their boats, their breath short as they swallow hard and strain their eyes into the darkness, wondering whether fire will rain down on them, whether Bragg's army is waiting for them. The Federal soldiers move into the brush, and in soft bottom land the spades busily go to work as the men vigorously dig protecting works. A battle line is formed and the men lie down for naps while others of their number keep watch.

The next morning, Confederates on the heights — Bragg's headquarters is to the South on the ridge but plainly in view — are shocked to see the enemy on their side of the river a few hundred yards from the ridge. By 1 p.m. November 24th, Sherman is on the move, going forward in

three echelons, and in minutes the Northern forces are pressing around the heights near the river bank at the northern end of the ridge. Confederate outposts quickly are hit and driven back.

But Sherman's map is bad and his view is obscured on the diagonal approach from the North through the drizzling rain. He thinks he has captured the northern end of the ridge and has attained his objective. But he is mistaken. He has captured a hill separated from the northern end of Missionary Ridge. From the top, he sees his men will have to dash down a rugged slope and across a 500-yard ravine before they can reach the ridge, where trenches and cannon wait to pour murderous fire on the attackers. The Confederates push forward to dislodge Sherman, but are thrown back. Again they try and again, but are repulsed. Night comes early as low-hanging clouds lower visibility, and the Union soldiers are left to entrench and fight another day.

Battle Above the Clouds

While Sherman is maneuvering, on the other side of Chattanooga, where Lookout Mountain rises, Fighting Joe Hooker is on the move. "Fighting Joe" has a formidable name for a general. His service has been honorable and there is good reason for all who think he earned his nickname in battle. But in truth, he got it for not fighting. While a West Point cadet, Hooker and E. Kirby Smith, who was to become a Confederate general, found themselves engaged in sharp argument, during which Hooker made remarks personally offensive to Kirby Smith. The future Confederate insisted on an apology. Hooker refused, prompting Kirby Smith to deliver half a dozen kicks to the seat of Hooker's pants. Still Hooker did nothing. In derision, his fellow cadets gave him the nickname he was to justify in battle, if not on the West Point parade ground—"Fighting Joe."

With 10,000 men, Hooker crosses Lookout Creek at the western base of Lookout Mountain and moves through the heavy mists rising from the bend of the Tennessee River below, enfolding the slopes of the mountain in cloudy camouflage reaching across the plateau halfway up the mountain-side, from which the slope rises again to the base of craggy cliffs at the mountain's point. By 10 a.m., Hooker encounters the mountain guard composed of 1,500 of Confederate Gen. E. C. Walthall's men, spread out in a thin line across the ravines and boulders and brush and fallen logs and trees

that scar the mountain's slope. Hooker, who has been ordered only to demonstrate, sends a question to Grant: "May I take the height?"

"If you can," Grant replies. And forward goes Fighting Joe against Walthall, who is under orders to "fall back fighting over the rocks."

It is a bitter skirmish. The outnumbered Confederates draw back behind boulders and pour their fire on the three lines of Northern troops assaulting them. The Yankee lines reach from the bluff at the river bank up the side of the mountain across the plateau to the base of the cliffs that rise to the point. They are like three huge spokes in a wheel, their hub halfway up the mountainside. Yankee cannon on the hills of Moccasin Bend, across the river and facing the mountain, send their shells screaming upon the battleground, and into Cravens House, the private home on the side of the mountain that Gen. Walthall has chosen for his headquarters. Confederate cannon on the mountaintop answer, but the Southerners see their shots going over the Yankees' heads and try to depress their cannon barrels by raising the trails of their gun carriages on rocks. Around them, Confederate sharpshooters who gained their skill with long rifles on accustomed squirrel hunts peer down on their human targets, take careful aim and fire as rapidly as they can load. Others, less adept with the rifle but no less determined, roll down boulders that cut swaths in the advancing Northern lines.

As the attack moves forward, log drifts sent down the Tennessee River strike and break through the pontoon bridge at Brown's Ferry, cutting off the troops of Yankee Gen. P. J. Osterhaus, who is coming to join the attack. Rapid steps are taken to repair the bridge and the delayed soldiers rush across the river at 11:30 a.m. to join the fray.

Finally, Confederate headquarters at Cravens House finds Yankee soldiers in the very front yard. After a hot exchange of fire, a stubborn retreat is ordered. By 2 p.m. the "Battle Above the Clouds," begun at Lookout Creek, is ended two miles away and 800 feet up the mountainside. But there is sporadic firing throughout the late afternoon as the Confederate forces atop the mountain are withdrawn across the valley toward Missionary Ridge. In the valley, the son of Gen. John C. Breckinridge, a Confederate division commander from Kentucky, rides impetuously forward, seeking his father. But instead, in the confusion he rides into the lines of Northern Gen. James A. Williamson, losing his

spirited Kentucky racer to a Yankee soldier who admires horseflesh, and finds himself made a prisoner of war.

Gen. Breckinridge, meanwhile, is himself indisposed. Gen. Bragg was to write later to President Davis: "Breckinridge was totally unfit for any duty from the 23rd to the 27th—during all our trials—from drunkenness."

Showdown

It is not until the morning of November 25, 1863, that the troops in the valley can learn the outcome of the battle. Then, clouds and mists having been swept away by night breezes and the day dawning sunny and clear, the brilliance of the Stars and Stripes is seen whipped in the breeze from the mountain's point where industrious Union soldiers plant it after a hard climb. The cheers of the Northern forces in the valley ring out spontaneously, and the soldiers in blue turn their faces toward the real showdown—Missionary Ridge. This is the last major obstacle protecting the heart of the South from a fatal thrust of Northern steel. And formidable indeed it is. Rising 400 or more feet above the valley's floor, Missionary Ridge runs from the river on the North, where Sherman has a foothold, into Georgia on the South, and past the old battlefield at Chickamauga. Along its length run three lines of rifle pits, one at the bottom, one halfway up the side and a third along the crest, supported by cannon. This is the line the Union soldiers must break or be broken against. And the outcome will have more than military value.

If the Northern soldiers can break Missionary Ridge, they may sweep onward and press the South to final defeat. But if the South can hold firm, the war may drag on without military decision—and that favors the South. The North is growing tired of the bloody war. There is increasing sentiment to follow the earlier advice of Horace Greeley and let the "erring sisters" depart, to negotiate a peace, to let the Confederate States of America stand, and have an end to war and death. If, however, the Southerners can defeat the Federal army, even though they have failed to seize their golden opportunity after Chickamauga, even though the siege is now broken, there is hope for even an earlier peace and recognition of the independence of the Confederacy.

The decision to be made on Missionary Ridge is more than which army shall seize a hill, more than which shall

be able to inflict more casualties on the other. This is the battle that may lead to a final answer.

Sherman is in position, his work cut out for him. Bragg may be expected to shift reinforcements from the southern end of the ridge to strengthen the defenses against Sherman. So Hooker is ordered to go forward from Lookout Mountain toward Rossville Gap, to pin the Confederate left flank and thus favor Sherman. In the center, around Orchard Knob, the Army of the Cumberland under Gen. Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga," is to stand fast.

"Fighting Joe" Hooker's performance on this bright day is not so spectacular as it was on the cloudy day before. Forward he goes with his men from Lookout Mountain toward Rossville.

It appears to be an easy mission, though an important one. But Hooker reckons without Chattanooga Creek, a narrow, sluggish stream that drains the low and swampy land between Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge and flows into the Tennessee River near the foot of the mountain. Hooker's men become bogged down around the meandering stream. And confusion is general as Hooker finds himself without pontoons to bridge the twisting creek. By the time he is able to cross and move forward, it is too late for him to be of much value.

Sherman Repulsed

Sherman is denied the anticipated assistance of Hooker's movement. And he needs all the assistance he can get. Though he outnumbers the Confederate defenders on the northern end of the Ridge, he faces an able fighter in Gen. Patrick Cleburne, whose distinctive battle flags dot the ridgetop. The Confederate War Department has authorized Cleburne's units to use a blue flag bearing a white border and a full silver moon. As long as these flags wave in the breeze, there is assurance the northern end of the Confederate line is intact.

Sherman sends his men forward, across the open space pounded by cannon and rifle fire. A rail fence provides a further barricade, sending deadly splinters into the air as it is struck by cannonballs. "Jump the fence, men," a colonel shouts. "Tear it down." Some men fall dying on the fence, others sweep its rails away and the charge pushes on. Up and then back down the slope washes the tide of Union attack, then up again. So close are the adversaries

each can see in the other's battle lines faces contorted in exertion, in excitement, in fear and in shock. The Confederate cannon crews serve their guns and blast gaping holes in the advancing Federal lines. The stubborn Northerners finally push their way halfway up the ridgetop and gain a foothold that for a moment looks as though it may provide the foundation for a Yankee success. The lodgement is near the point where a stone railroad tunnel runs through the ridge. But suddenly the mouth of the tunnel disgorges hundreds of charging Confederates. "Look to the tunnel!" a Union officer shouts. "They're coming through the tunnel." The Rebel force looses a heavy fire, taking the Northerners in the rear, enfilading their position. Dead and bleeding men fall heavily, then others rise with hands thrown above their heads and surrender. The Confederates march them over the crest. At the very end of the Confederate line, Union fire wipes out all the gray artillerymen tending a semicircle of cannon. But as the Federal troops advance within 25 steps of the guns, Confederate infantrymen take over the artillery, and resume the deadly blasting until a Confederate bayonet charge routs the audacious Yankees and sends them reeling back to the foot of the ridge. The full silver moon of Pat Cleburne's battle flag still waves triumphant. At 3 p.m., Sherman withdraws his weary, beaten divisions.

Delay

On Orchard Knob, Gen. Grant looks to his right, toward Hooker, and to his left, toward Sherman, and sees himself flanked by failure. Before him, the Confederate fortress stands intact. As Sherman rests his attack, a message comes from Grant. "Attack again." Sherman sends an officer to ask if Grant's signal has been a mistake. "Keep pounding," Grant replies. Sherman directs a staff officer: "Go signal Grant. The orders were that I should get as many as possible in front of me, and God knows there are enough. They've been reinforcing all day." Shortly, Grant turns to Thomas. It is up to him to move with his Army of the Cumberland, the army that had been broken at Chickamauga and now lies restive, sensitive that it has been idle while Hooker and Sherman have done the moving. Gens. Baldy Smith, John Rawlins and James Wilson urge a demonstration against the center of the Ridge. In a low voice, Rawlins urges Grant. "We must do something for Sherman," Grant agrees. The commanding general turns to Thomas: "Don't you think it is about time to order your troops to advance

against the enemy's first line of rifle pits?" Thomas does not reply. He gazes quietly toward Missionary Ridge through his field glasses. When nothing happens, Grant asks Thomas what is causing the delay. Grant is surprised to see Gen. Thomas J. Wood, commander of one of the two divisions due to make the charge against the ridge, standing talking to Thomas instead of being with his troops.

Gen. Wilson turns to Gen. Rawlins. "If I'd given an order to Thomas an hour ago to move, I would know the reason why the order had not been obeyed." With an oath, Rawlins mutters, "I will see what can be done." With more swearing, Rawlins goes to Grant and tells of his conversation with Wilson. Grant makes no reply but turns to Gen. Wood.

"Why are you not with your division? I gave orders for it to move an hour ago." Wood is surprised. This is the first he has heard of a charge, he says. His division has been ready all day.

During the delay, Gen. Gordon Granger becomes so excited by the display of Confederate artillery along the crest of the ridge he requisitions a cannon of his own and joins its crew in serving it and firing it toward the ridge, watching gleefully, then reloading and firing again. The other generals are disgusted by his antics. Finally, at 3 p.m., Grant storms at Thomas: "Gen. Thomas, order Granger to turn that battery over to its proper commander and take command of his own corps. And now order your troops to advance and take the enemy's first line of rifle pits."

And Finally the Center

Now Thomas does move. Soon the signal of six cannon shots breaks the stillness in the Northern lines. And then the Army of the Cumberland moves forward in a giant crescent, in good alignment, across the nearly open land between Orchard Knob and Missionary Ridge, where trees have been cleared by shot and shell, or have been cut for firewood or the erection of defenses by both sides. Confederates on the flat land in front of the ridge fall back before the assault. Three hundred yards from the first line of Confederate rifle pits a volley from the men in gray staggers the Union ranks. A bugle sounds, piercingly sending the notes of "Charge" across the battlefield, then repeats it twice. A Yankee soldier with a sense of humor cries out, "That's the surgeon's call. The doctor wants you." But there

is no hesitation. The blue lines go forward on the run, while the Confederate cannon belch smoke. Fifty paces from the Confederates' log barricade, the Union soldiers run, then dash to the works, jump them and fire. Confederate soldiers fall, while others run as fast as they can up the ridge-side. The Union soldiers catch their breath while reloading their guns. The second blue line moves forward, and is hit by leaden rain, but comes on. Soon the fire is so heavy the Federal soldiers, ordered to stand fast after taking the first row of Southern defenses, find it unendurable. In other places, the blue and gray forces become intermixed and the Confederates above cease fire lest they hit their own men.

Little Gen. Phil Sheridan, a game rooster of a fighting man, is in the front of his men. His horse is shot from under him, but he remounts on a black steed and pushes forward until his Union line hesitates as ordered after its initial success. Sitting his horse in the open—there is no cover—Sheridan drains a dram of whisky from a borrowed silver flask, waves it at a group of Confederate officers at a battery above and shouts, "Here's at you." The Confederates answer with blasts from two cannon, striking so close to the general that Sheridan is showered with dirt. Angry little Sheridan shouts, "That is ungenerous; I shall take those guns."

Forward he and other Yankees with similar inclination go. This is the way to victory. This is the way to escape the hail of Confederate bullets. Up the ridgetide they run, into and across the second row of rifle pits and into the third, at the crest.

'Who Ordered Those Men?'

Grant, at Orchard Knob, sees the upward surge, and turns angrily to Thomas. "Thomas, who ordered those men up the ridge?" In slow, casual voice, Thomas answers, "I don't know. I did not." Then Thomas turns to Granger. "Did you order them up, Granger?" "No," Granger replies. "By whose order is this?" Grant demands. Imperturbably, Thomas answers, "By their own, I fancy." "They started up without orders," Granger says, "and when those fellows get started, all hell can't stop them."

Irate Grant mutters that somebody will suffer if all does not come out well, then turns, without giving further orders, to watch the ridge, biting hard on his cigar.

The Confederate line begins to give way. Some soldiers flee, others fight hand to hand. One Confederate officer,

brave to the end, stands defiantly, armed only with his drawn sabre, facing the enemy. A private from Indiana, with fixed bayonet, comes upon him and stops. Then he throws down his weapon and crouching like an animal ready to spring, advances. The Confederate officer, his chivalric gesture unequal to this approach, throws down his sword and flees.

At Bragg's headquarters, a woman who lives nearby pleads with the Confederate commander anxiously. "Oh, general, the Yankees are coming," she cries. "What shall I do? Where shall I go?"

"Woman," says Bragg, "are you mad? There are not Yankees enough in Chattanooga to come up here. Those are all my prisoners."

But it does not take long for Bragg to learn as much about the situation as the desperate woman has sensed. His crest lines break in half a dozen places, almost simultaneously. The left begins to cave in, and on the right, units quickly turn across the ridge, facing North instead of West, to hold the end of their line and keep the advancing Federal troops from turning the flank disastrously. "Chickamauga," the Confederates shout, using the name of their victory as a parting weapon.

Bragg rides about, trying to rally his troops: "Men, here's your general. Rally!" But he cannot stop the confusion.

"A panic which I had never before witnessed seemed to have seized upon officers and men," Bragg reports, "and each appeared to be struggling for his personal safety, regardless of his duty and his character."

Conquest

Darkness is the only Confederate ally. It comes early on this bloody November afternoon, and permits the Confederates to draw back from the ridge, across Chickamauga Creek several miles to the East.

Officers and men of the Yankee forces throw their hats and knapsacks in the air as they stand upon the crest of the ridge, in jubilation over taking the fortress they had little hope of storming successfully.

The soldiers are crowding around Gen. Sheridan on his black horse as Gen. Granger rides up. "What do you think

of this, general?" the boys shout at him. "I think you disobeyed orders, you damned rascals," he answers.

Bragg is defeated, by circumstance and by the best generals of the Union — Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas.

The Confederate aim now is to get to Chickamauga Station, in sight of Missionary Ridge, where the Western & Atlantic Railroad offers a line of retreat toward Atlanta. "By 9 p.m.," reports Gen. Pat Cleburne, "everything was across (Chickamauga Creek), except the dead and a few stragglers lingering here and there under the shadow of the trees for the purpose of being captured: faint-hearted patriots succumbing to the hardships of the war and the imagined hopelessness of the hour."

A Confederate lieutenant, marching at the head of a retreating column, turns to his captain. "This, captain," he says, "is the death knell of the Confederacy, for if we cannot cope with those fellows with the advantages we had on this line, there is not a line between here and the Atlantic Ocean where we can stop them."

"Hush, Lieutenant," says the captain, "that is treason you are talking."

But the lieutenant is prophetic.

Confederate Gen. D. H. Hill expresses the lieutenant's thoughts another way: "Chattanooga sealed the fate of the Confederacy."

"No satisfactory excuse can possibly be given," says Gen. Bragg, "for the shameful conduct of the troops on the left in allowing their line to be penetrated. The position was one which ought to have been held by a line of skirmishers against any assaulting column, and wherever resistance was made the enemy fled in disorder after suffering heavy loss. Those who reached the ridge did so in a condition of exhaustion from the great physical exertion in climbing which rendered them powerless and the slightest effort would have destroyed them.

"But one possible reason presents itself to my mind in explanation of this bad conduct in veteran troops who never before failed in any duty assigned them, however difficult and hazardous. They had for two days confronted the enemy, marshaling his immense forces in plain view and exhibiting to their sight such a superiority of numbers as may have intimidated weak-minded and untried soldiers; but our veterans had so often encountered similar hosts when

the strength of position was against us, and with perfect success, that not a doubt crossed my mind."

November 25, 1863, was on Wednesday. The next day was Thanksgiving Day, and great was the Union thanks while the Confederate army retreated toward Ringgold, Ga.

'If I Had a Thousand Lives'

A day later, young Sam Davis, the 21-year-old uniformed Confederate soldier who had been ordered executed as a spy, is taken out of his cell at Pulaski, is seated on a pine box coffin in a horsedrawn wagon and is driven to a little hill on the outskirts of town, where gallows await him. Sam walks up to the gallows and stands silently as his executioners adjust the trap that is to be kicked out, to leave Sam Davis dangling, kicking until strangulation or a broken neck administered by rough hemp rope shall end his life. But wait, there is the galloping beat of horses' hooves on the dirt road. Someone is coming. It is a Union staff officer with a message from Gen. D. M. Dodge, an offer of a last-minute chance to save the boy's life. If he will tell the source of his information his life will be saved.

Sam Davis slowly looks down and around at the faces turned up awaiting his answer. He gives it. "If I had a thousand lives, I would lose them all here before I would betray my friend or the confidence of my informer."

Quietly Sam Davis says to the provost marshal, "I am ready." The rope is adjusted. The trap is tripped. Sam Davis hangs between the gallows and eternity.

Sam Davis' death comes suddenly. The death of the Confederate States of America is a lingering one. After Missionary Ridge, it is ordained. The South no longer has the military strength to hope to defeat the enemy by arms. And after the defeat in the battle of Chattanooga, there is no longer hope of a stalemate that might lead to negotiated peace. With Sherman on the loose, there is no leashing the dogs of war. Chattanooga has indeed sealed the fate of the Confederacy. Until now there had been a chance. Now there is none.

Shadow of Death

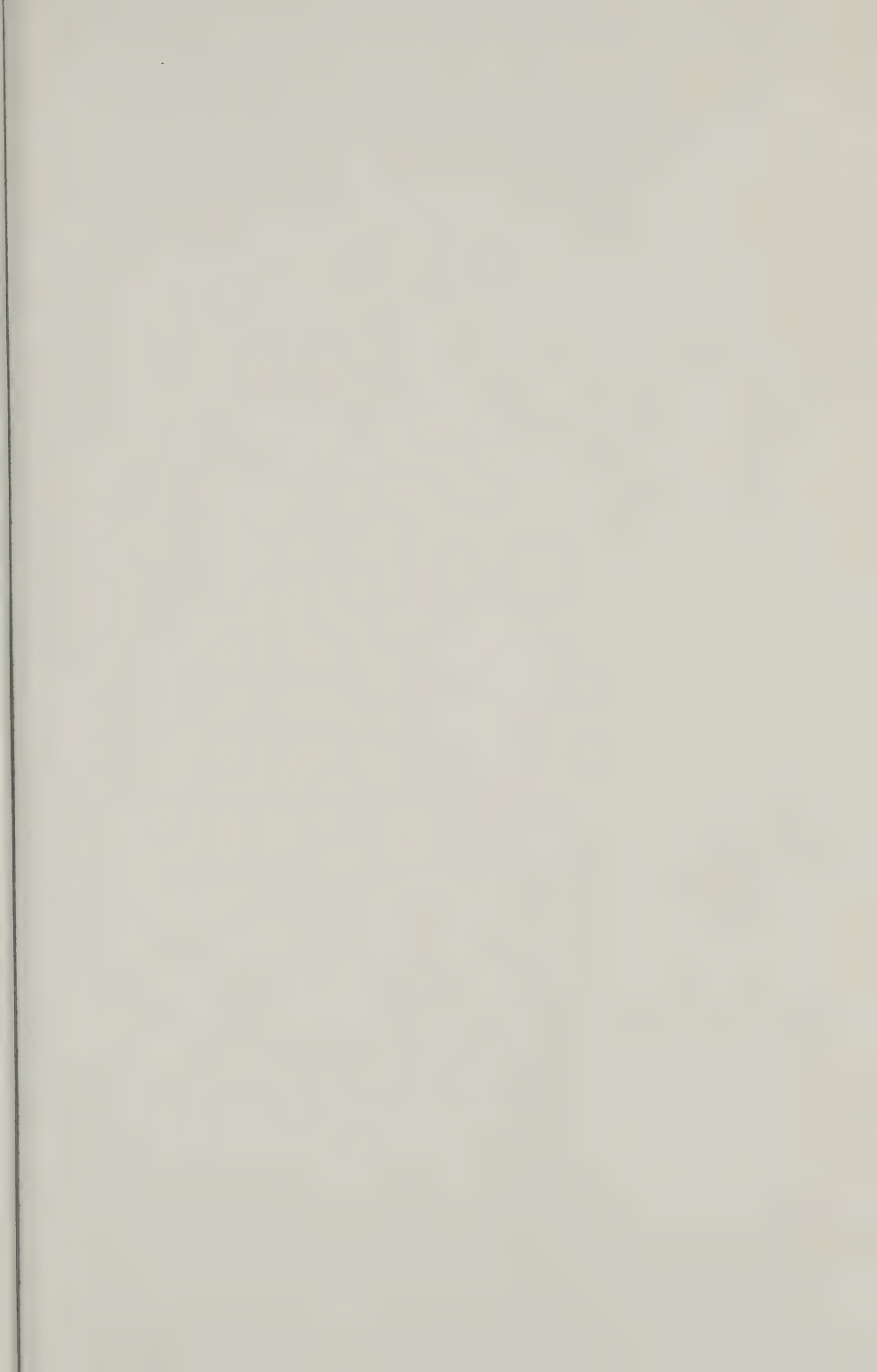
Grant's 80,000 at Missionary Ridge lost 752 killed, 4,713 wounded and 350 captured or missing. The 37,000 Confederates who opposed him lost 361 killed, 2,180 wounded and 4,146 captured or missing.

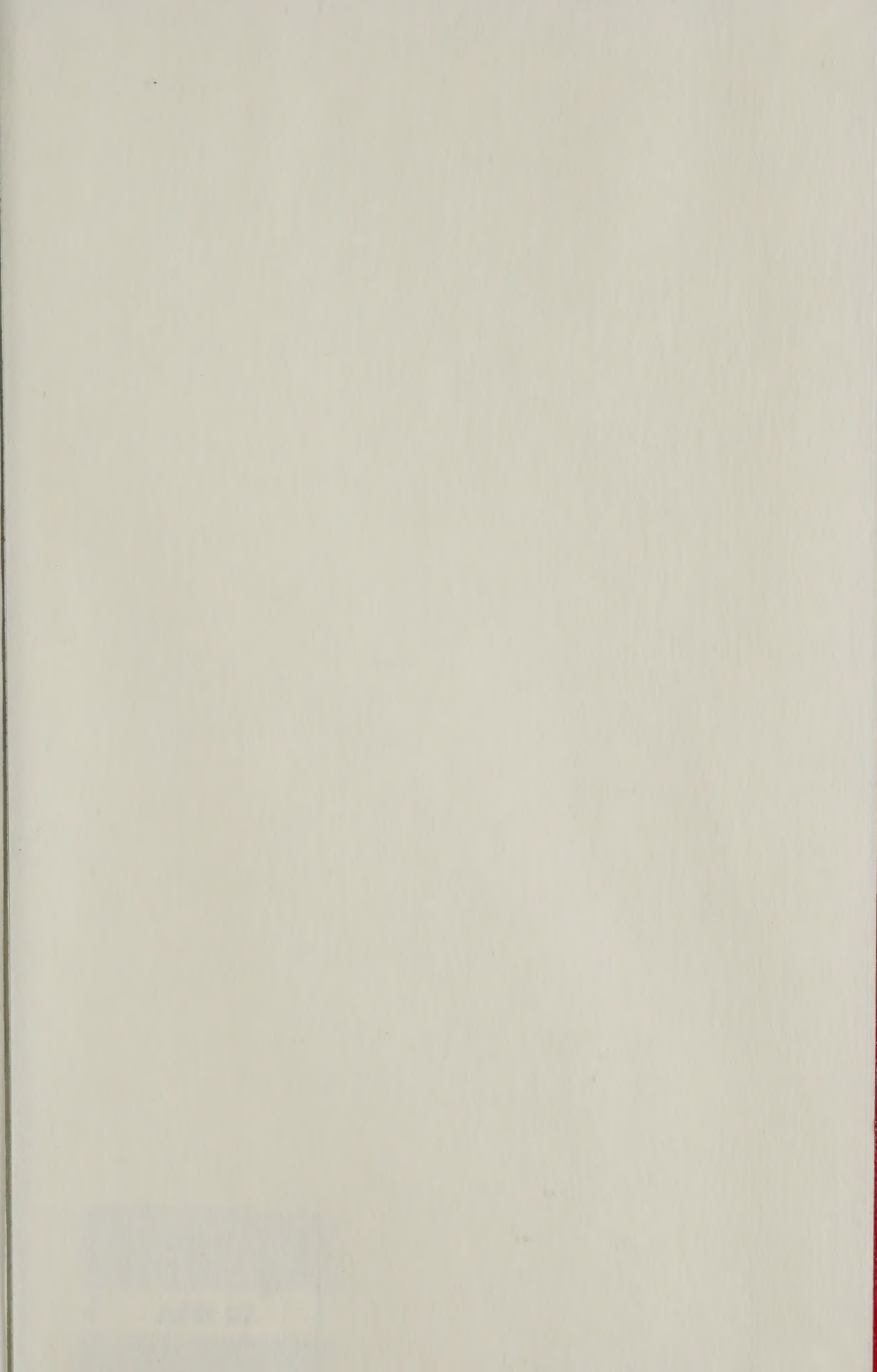
But they also lost the war.

More battles lie ahead. More death. More destruction. But the outcome is decided as the way is opened for Gen. Sherman's scorched earth "march to the sea."

Through the Southland, the strains of "Dixie" now ring more as a requiem than as a battle cry. The Confederate States of America have fought in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

From the heights of Lookout Mountain, an observer may look into seven states—Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina . . . and Virginia. The far-sighted, in November of 1863, might have seen a little Virginia settlement called Appomattox.







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